



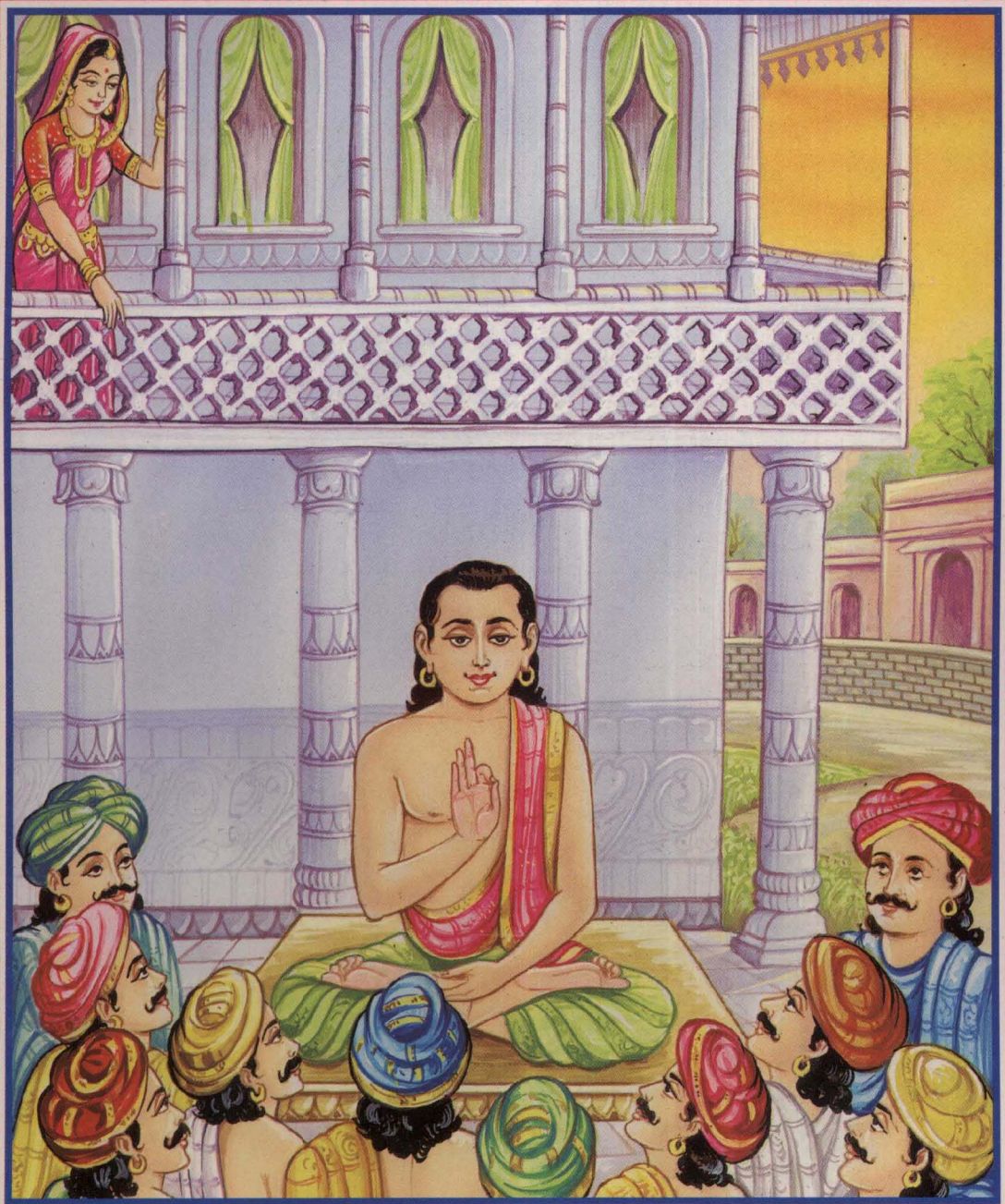
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Nandishen



Nandishen

One who walks may fall also. But to rise again and be careful and determined enough to reach the destination is the victory of a man's sagacity and courage. The life of muni Nandishen is an example of this.

Nandishen was the son of King Shrenik of Magadh. After listening to the sermon of Bhagavan Mahavir he got initiated as an ascetic. He acquired many special powers through austerities. Once a courtesan made fun of his austerities. This provoked his subdued ego. Conceit leads to one's downfall. The courtesan seduced the ascetic and he became a householder. While caught in trap of love, Nandishen's soul still remained awake. One day he regained his spiritual awareness and returned to the path of self-control and austerities.

The second short story in this book is 'Importance of Dress'. Udayan was the prime minister of King Kumarpal of Gujarat, a great devotee of Acharya Hemachandra Suri (12th century). During the last moments of his life he desired to listen to pious hymns recited by some ascetic. However, as there was no ascetic available, his sons brought an impersonator disguised as an ascetic and fulfilled the last wish of their father.

Whether it was the influence of the dress or the awakening of the inner piety but the impersonator disguised as ascetic became a true ascetic and took to the spiritual path.

The two stories included in this book inspire us to reverse the process of decline and climb the stair of spiritual rise. The author of these stories is **Acharya Shrimad Vijaya Nityanand Surishvar ji M.** who is famous as restorer of many temples and pilgrimages. We express our gratitude for this and many other picture stories of this series.

—**Shrichand Surana 'Saras'**

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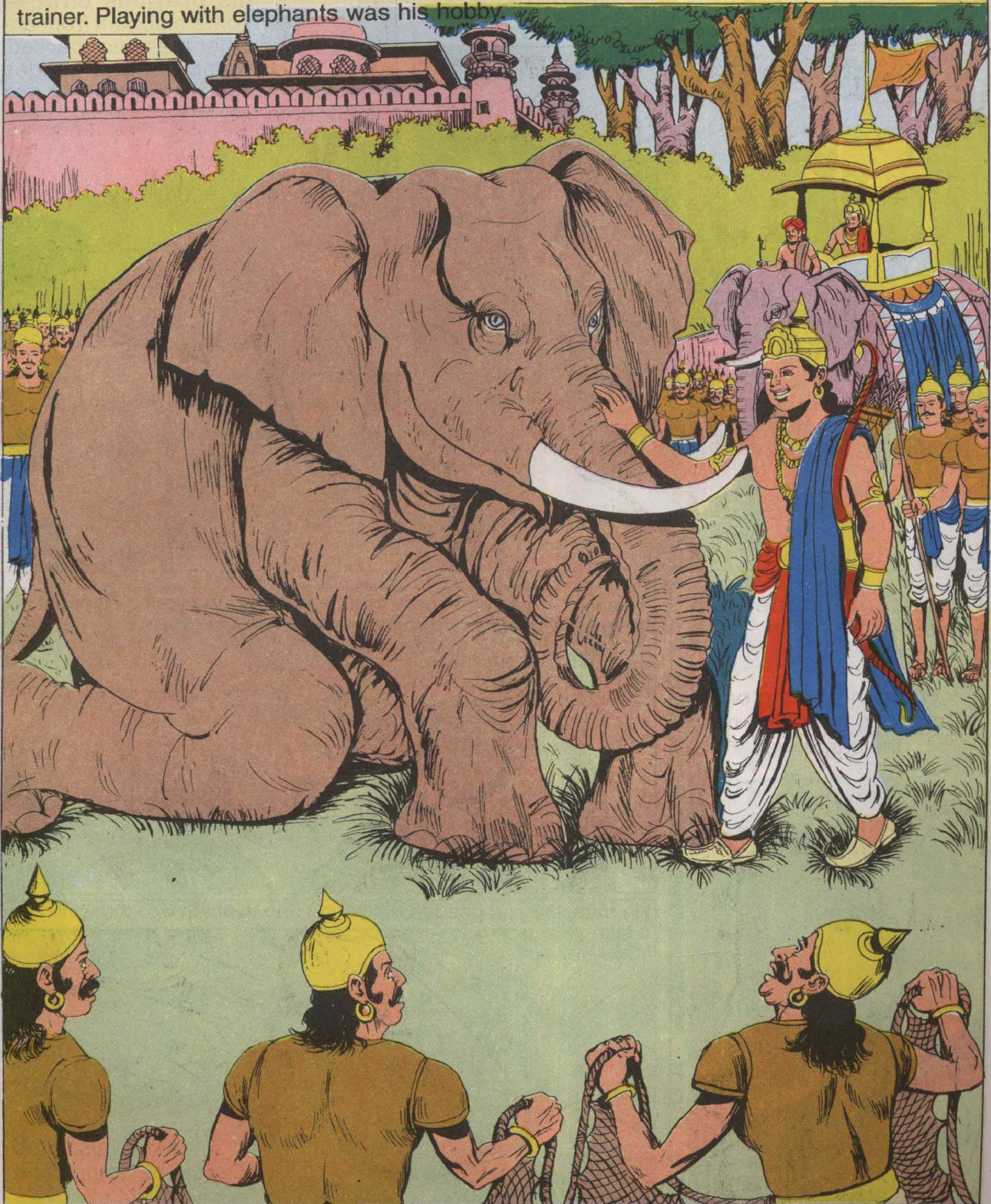
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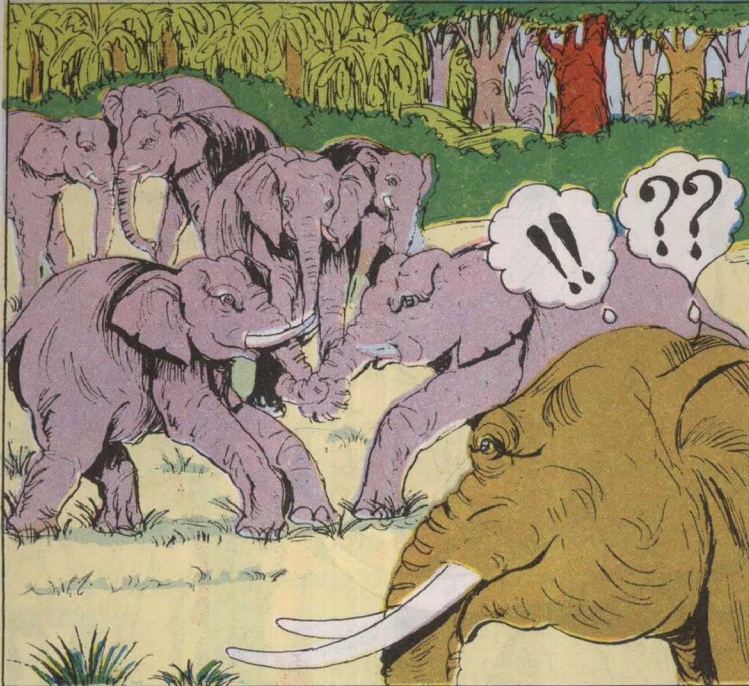
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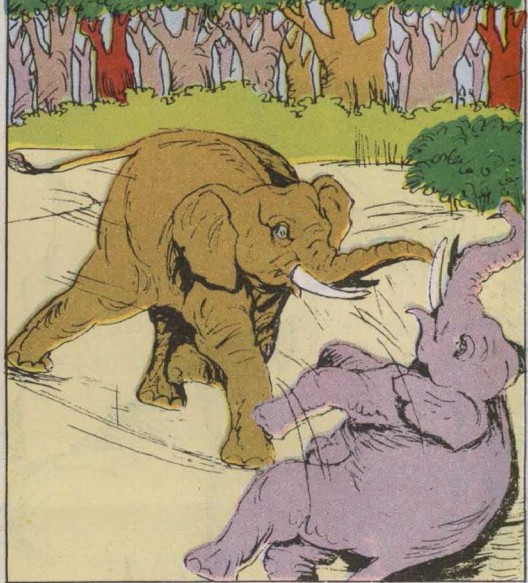
NANDISHEN Shrenik, the king of Magadh had many sons — Konik, Halla, Vihalla, Megh Kumar, and Nandishen. Nandishen was not just a great warrior but also an expert elephant-trainer. Playing with elephants was his hobby.



The jungles around Rajagriha were full of elephant herds. One bull male elephant was going through a Banana plantation with his herd. He came upon a young male playing around with cows female elephants. !! ??

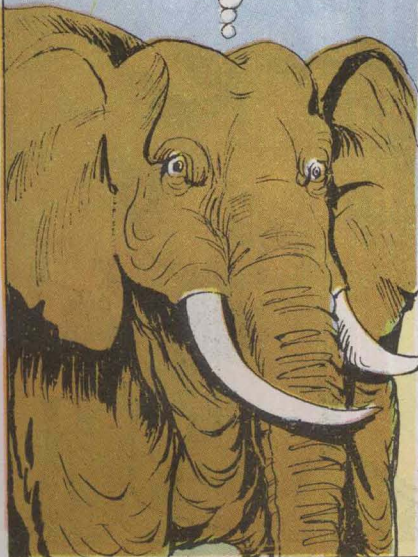


Suddenly he remembered an incident from his previous birth — some elephant from another area has attacked, trampled, and goaded him with tusks. He is groaning and is about to die.

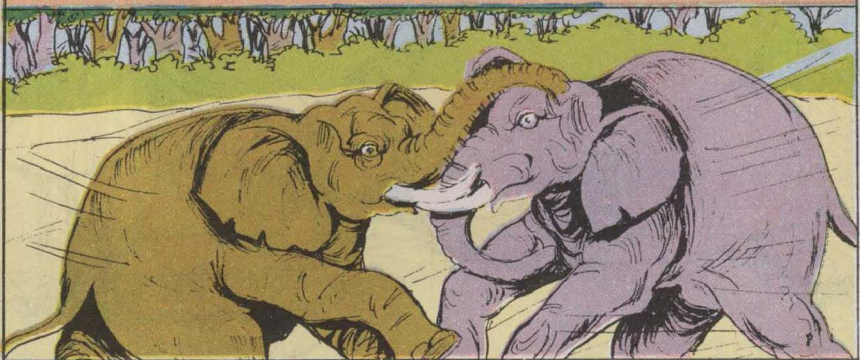


This scene made him worried —

When this young one matures he will kill me the same way.



This fear, made him angry and he attacked the young elephant.

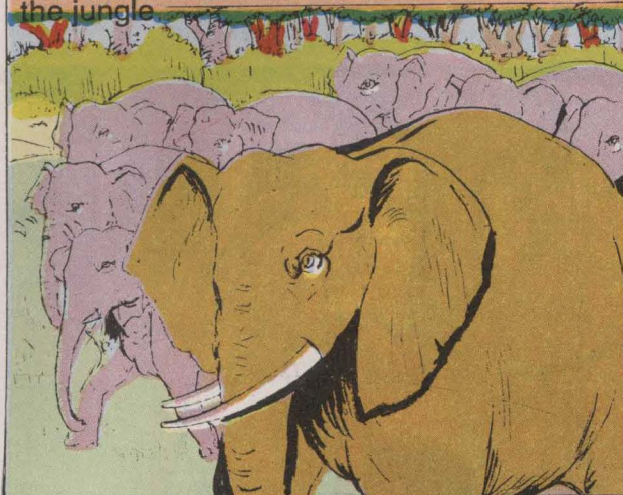


He trampled and goaded the young one to death and threw him in a lake.

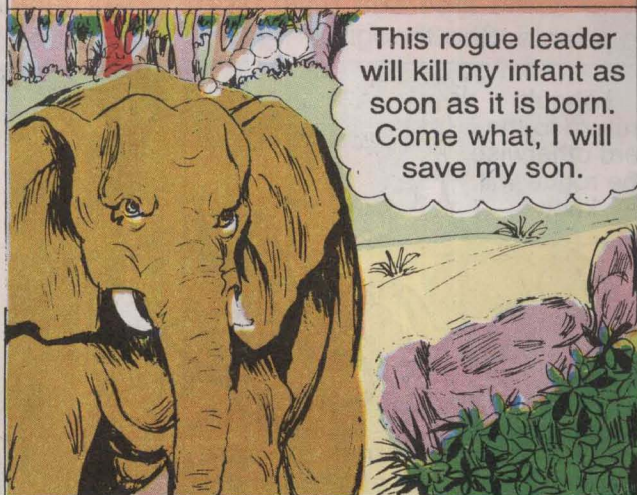


After this, mad with rage, he sought and killed every male.

Within a few days he became the king of the jungle

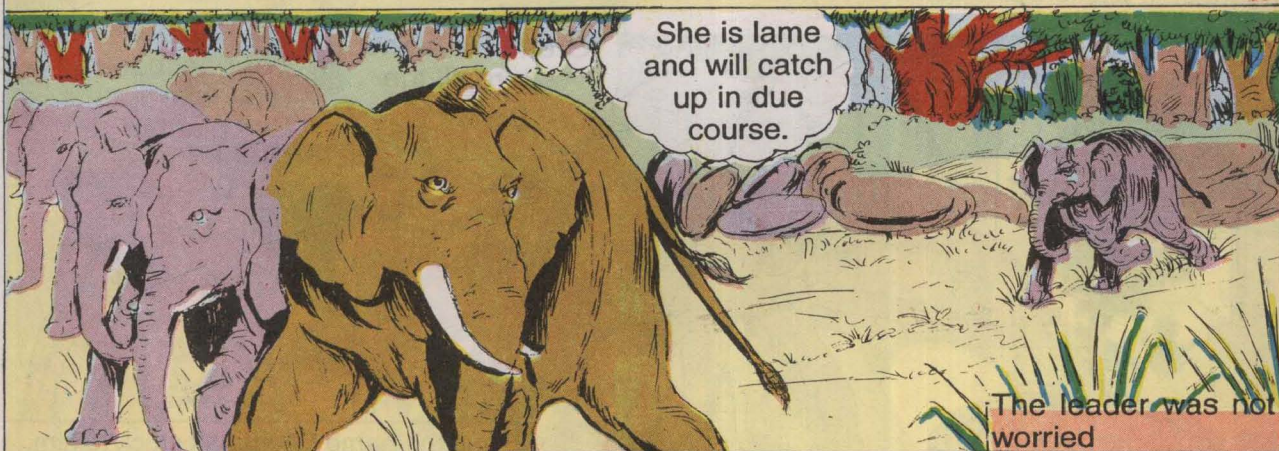


Once a cow elephant got pregnant. She thought -



This rogue leader will kill my infant as soon as it is born. Come what, I will save my son.

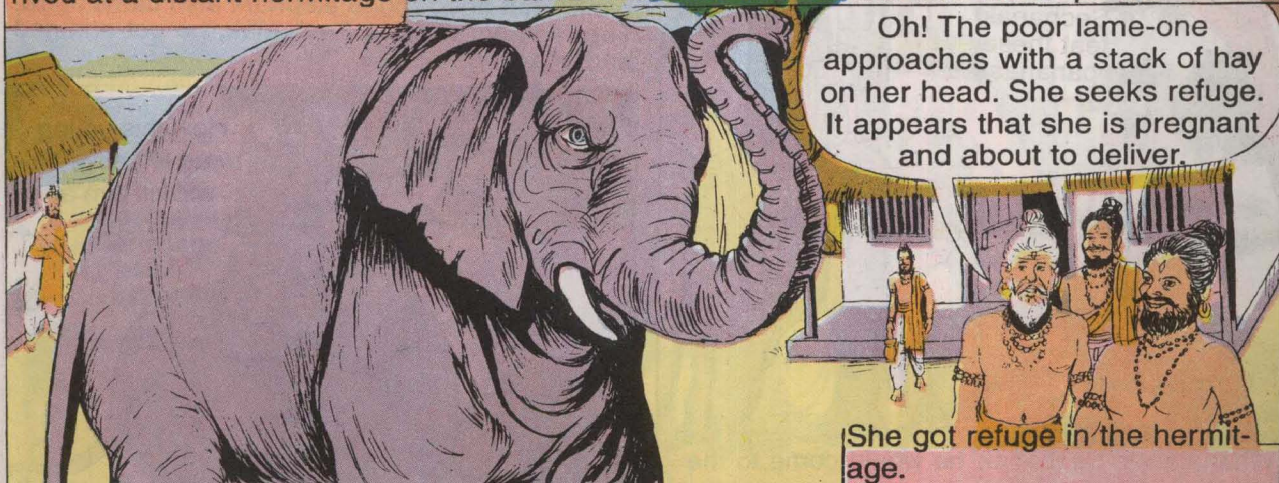
While the herd moved she limped to remain at the rear. Once in a while, she eloped for three-four days and rejoined the herd. The leader observed this for some days and thought —



She is lame and will catch up in due course.

The leader was not worried

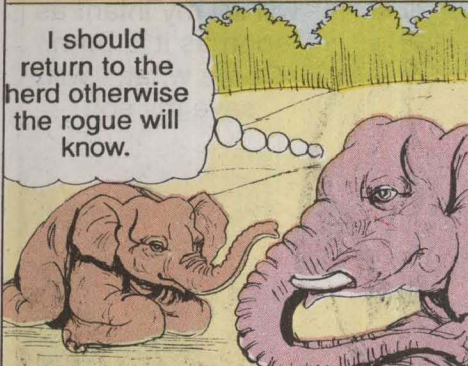
When the time of delivery approached the cow elephant looked for a safe place. She arrived at a distant hermitage on the banks of a river. The hermits saw the elephant —



Oh! The poor lame-one approaches with a stack of hay on her head. She seeks refuge. It appears that she is pregnant and about to deliver.

She got refuge in the hermitage.

After some time she gave birth to a male. She thought —

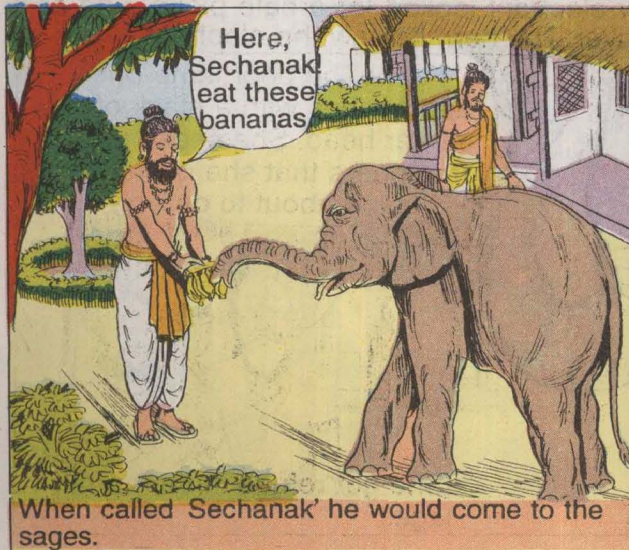


Leaving the newborn in the care of the hermits she returned to the herd.

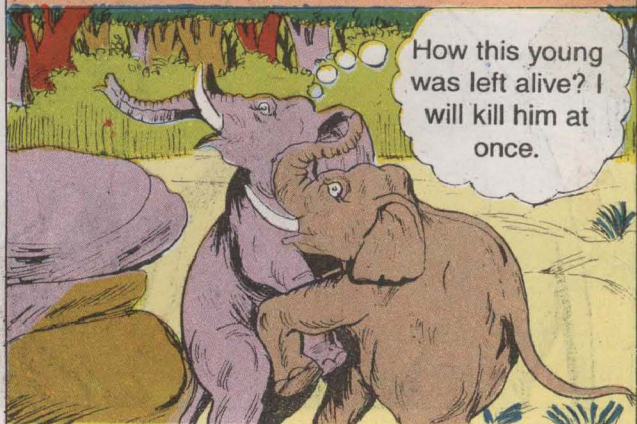
Here, in the hermitage, the sages fed the little elephant bananas and green vegetation and took proper care.



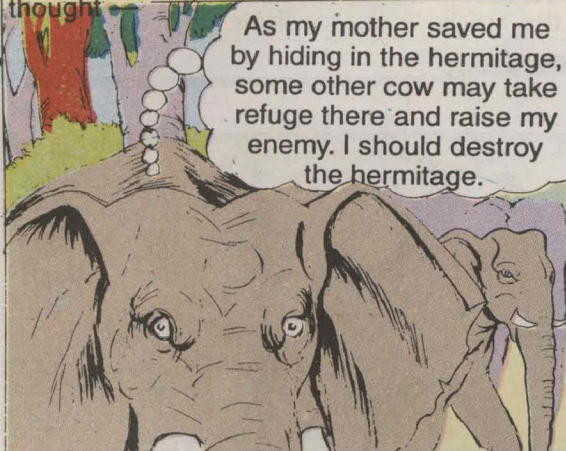
While growing, the young elephant also played around with the hermits. He watered the plants bringing water in pitchers and sometimes just in his trunk. Observing this the sages said —



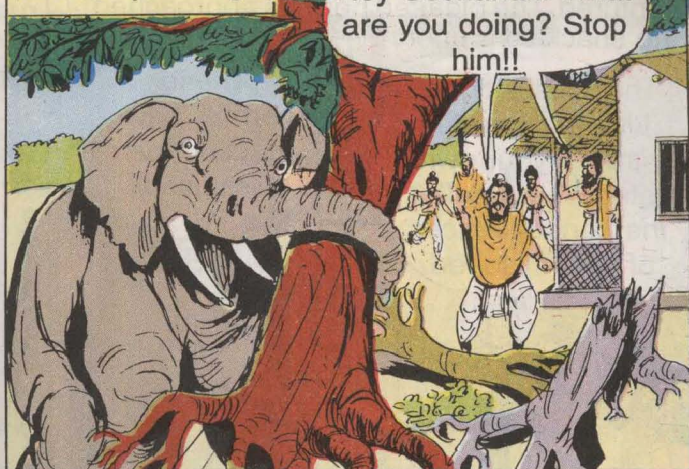
Once Sechanak was drinking water at the river-bank. That aged rogue elephant also came there. The moment he saw Sechanak, he got enraged and attacked.



But the old bull was no match for young Sechanak and was killed. Sechanak became new leader of the herd. One day thought



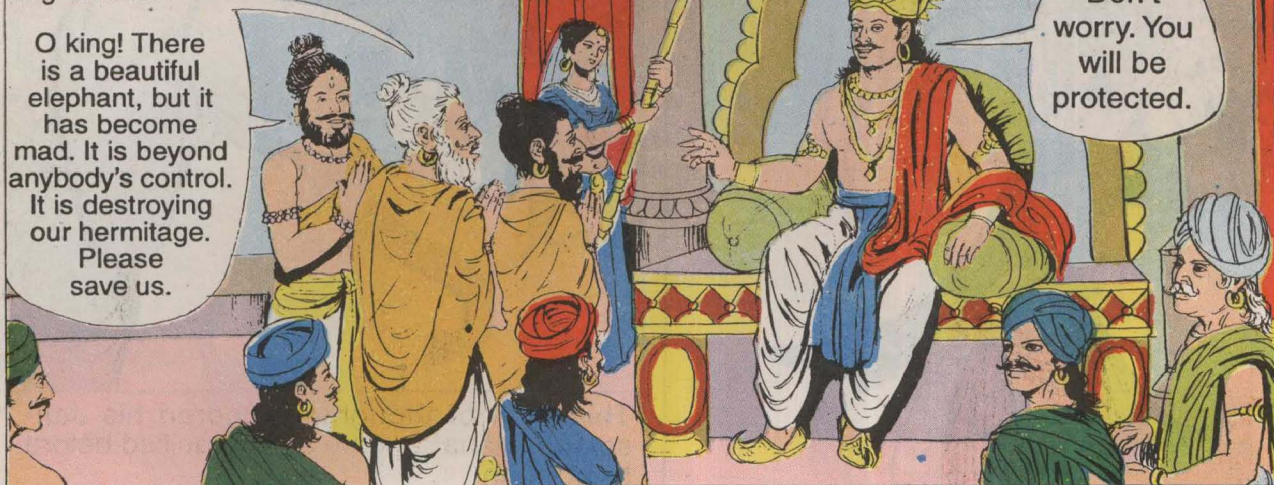
With this resolve he came to the hermitage and started uprooting trees



The hermits came with their sticks to stop Sechanak.



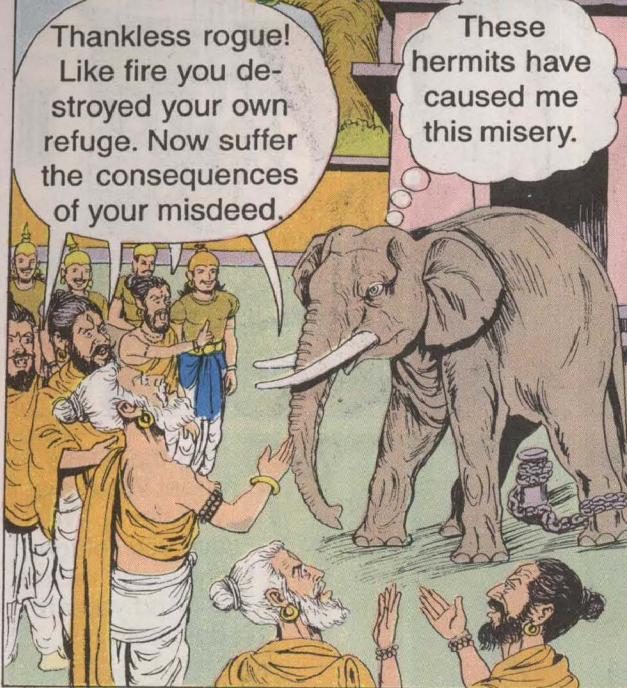
Afraid of their life, the sages ran away and approached king Shrenik



King Shrenik accompanied his soldiers. With the help of a trap the elephant was captured. The pleased hermits approached the shackled elephant.

Thankless rogue!
Like fire you destroyed your own refuge. Now suffer the consequences of your misdeed.

These hermits have caused me this misery.



The words of the hermits enraged Sechanak. He broke the shackles with one heave and rushed at the hermits. The terrified hermits and the soldiers ran for their life.

HELP!!

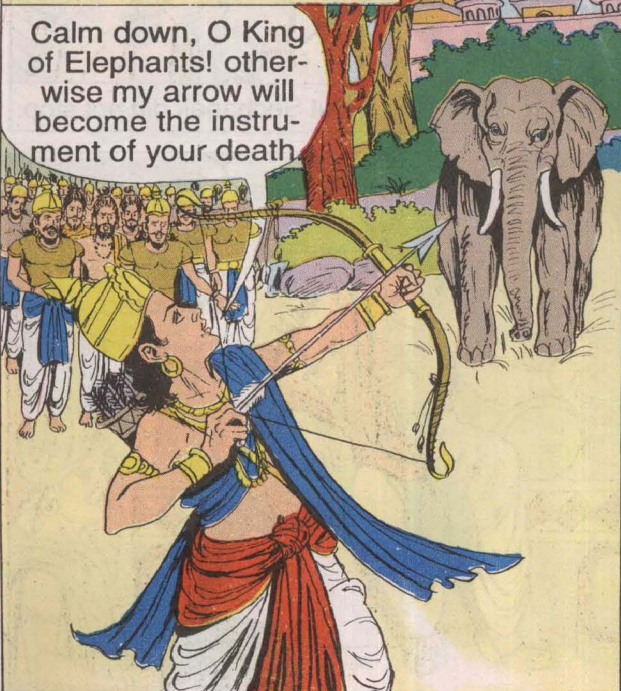
HELP! SAVE!
THE ROGUE
IS KILLING US!

RUN! HE
WILL TRA-
MPLE US!



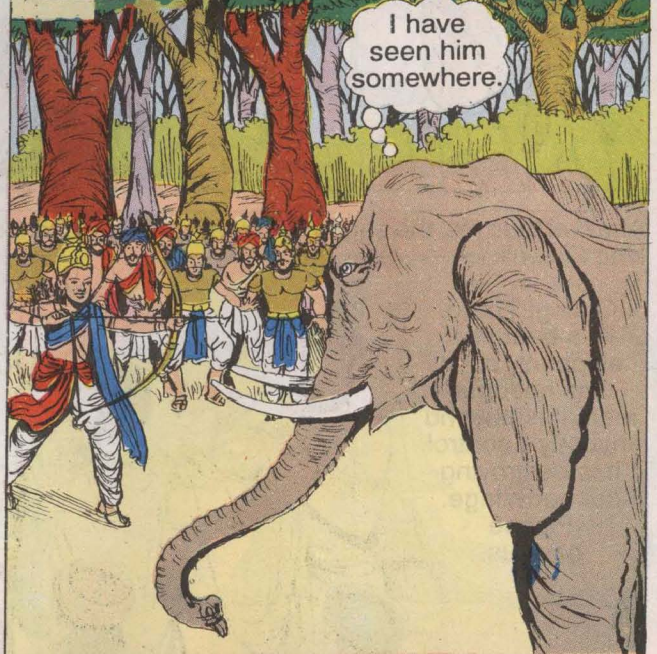
When all efforts by the soldiers to control Sechanak failed, prince Nandishen placed an arrow on his bow and confronted the elephant.

Calm down, O King of Elephants! otherwise my arrow will become the instrument of your death.



Sechanak stopped and carefully looked at Nandishen.

I have
seen him
somewhere.



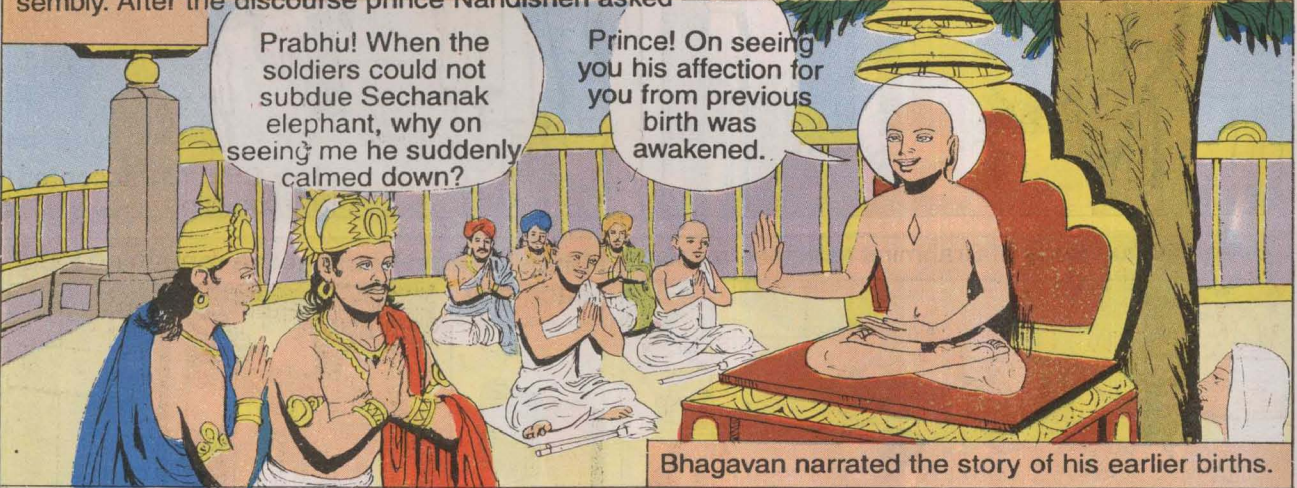
This train of thoughts triggered his Jatismaran jnana* and he stood pacified before Nandishen.

* The knowledge about earlier births

This sudden calming down of the elephant puzzled Nandishen.



Once Bhagavan Mahavir came to Rajagriha. King Shrenik and his family attended the religious assembly. After the discourse prince Nandishen asked —



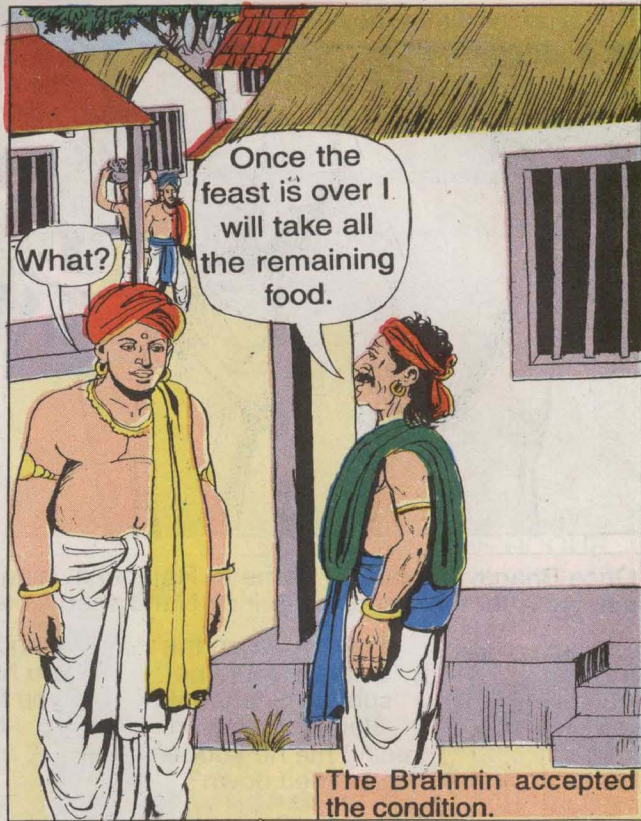
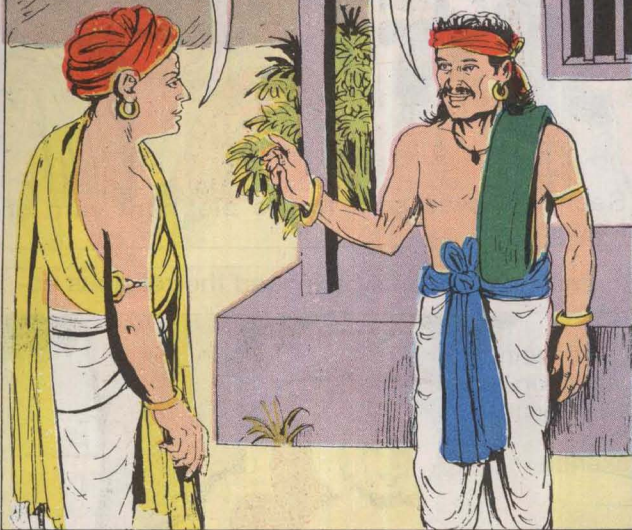
In a village lived a rich Brahmin named Mukhapriya. Once he decided to arrange for a feast for a hundred thousand Brahmins. He conveyed the idea to his wife. The wife said



A poor hardworking person lived nearby.
The Brahmin approached him —

Bhim! Can you manage my work. I need your help.

Why not! But on one condition.

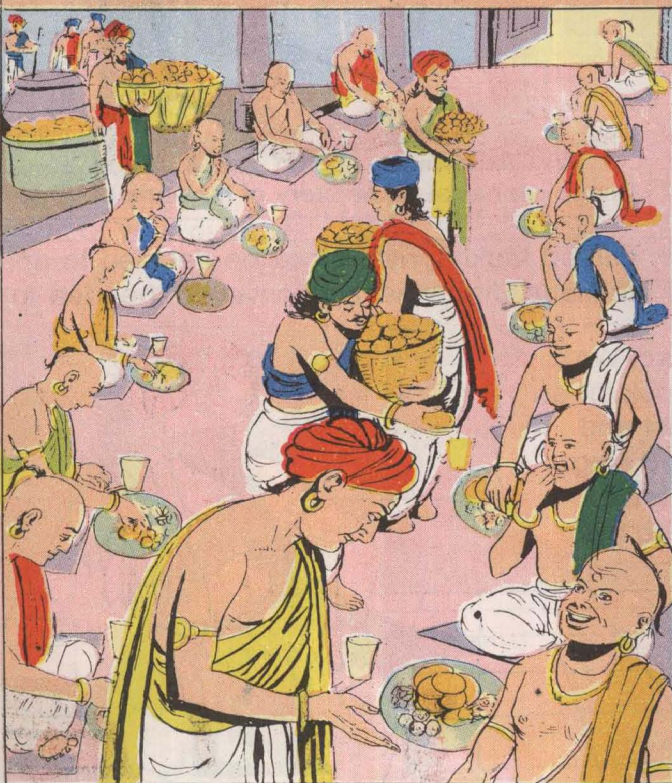


Once the feast is over I will take all the remaining food.

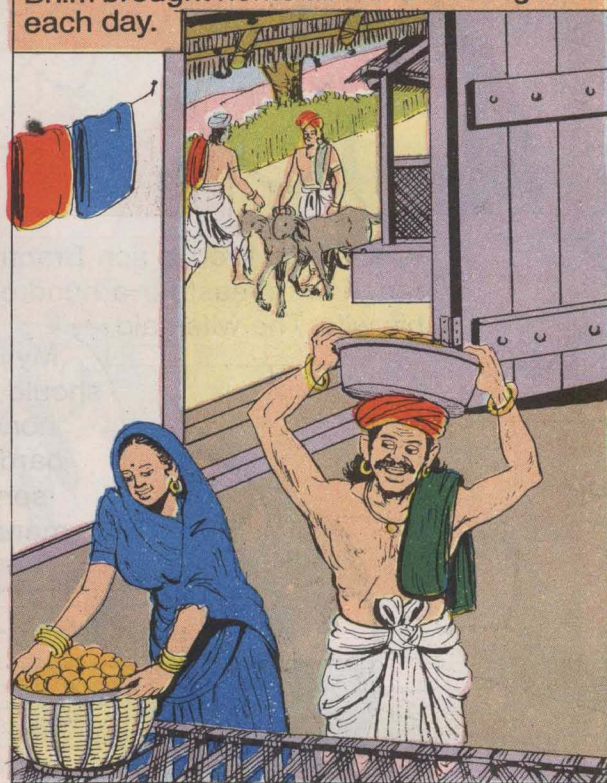
What?

The Brahmin accepted the condition.

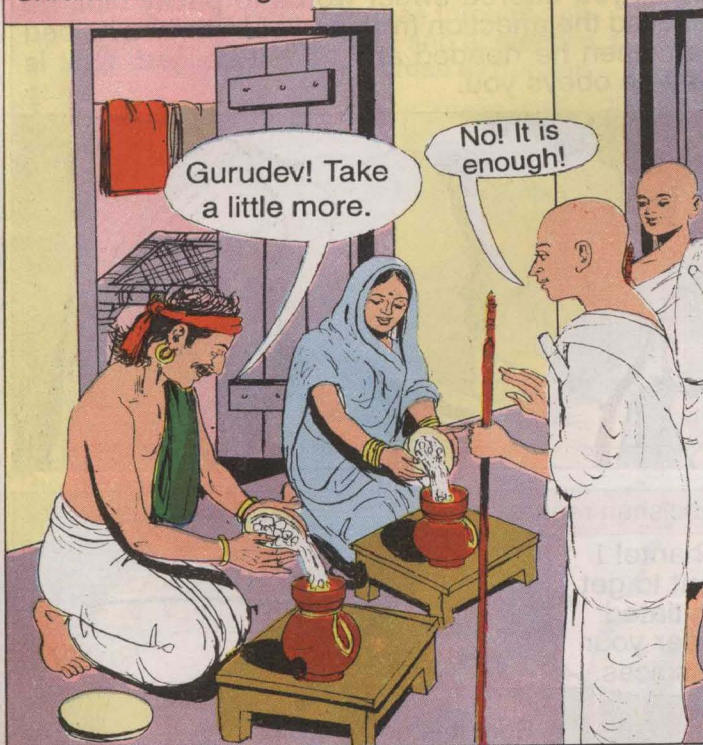
Everyday hundreds of Brahmins took their meals.



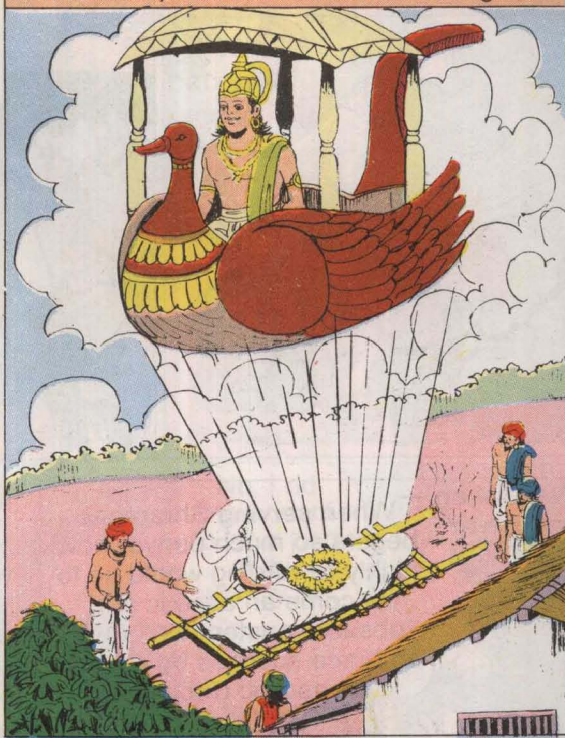
Bhim brought home all the remaining food each day.



Bhim offered with devotion all this food to the Shramans* visiting the town.



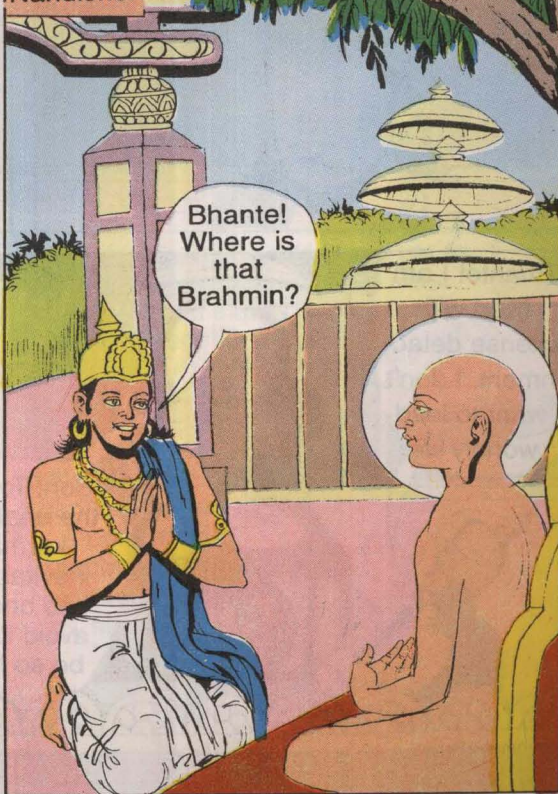
As a result of the pious act of offering pure food to detached Shramans and Shramanis, Bhim reincarnated as a god.



When his life-span as a god ended, Bhim was born Nandishen, the son of king Shrenik.



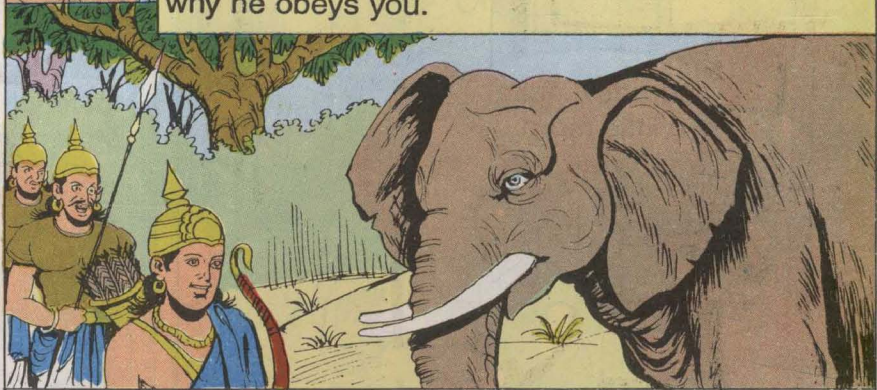
Nandishen



After many a rebirth he was born as an elephant.



This Sechanak is the soul that was the Brahmin. When you uttered sweet words to pacify him, he recalled the affection from earlier birth. You helped him when he needed and he felt obliged. That is why he obeys you.



Nandishen —

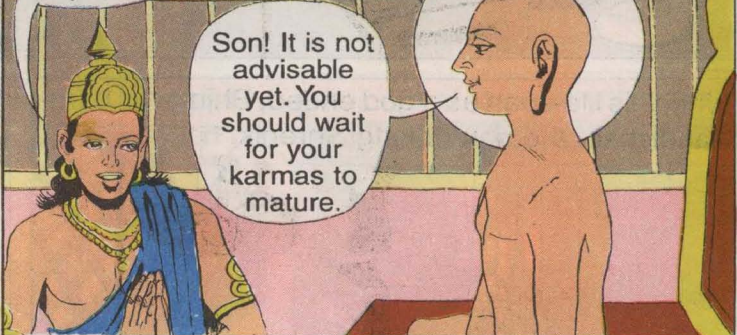
When serving Shramans begets so much punya* how highly rewarding would be to become an ascetic and observe austerities?! I will embrace success by accepting ascetic discipline.



Nandishen requested —

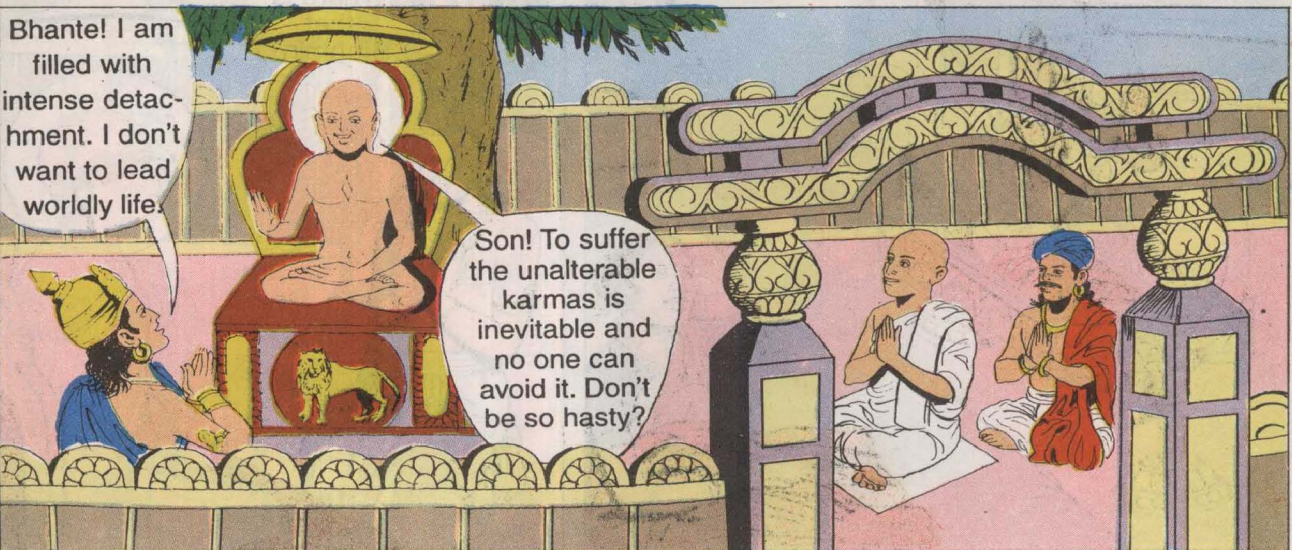
Bhante! I want to get initiated under your auspices.

Son! It is not advisable yet. You should wait for your karmas to mature.

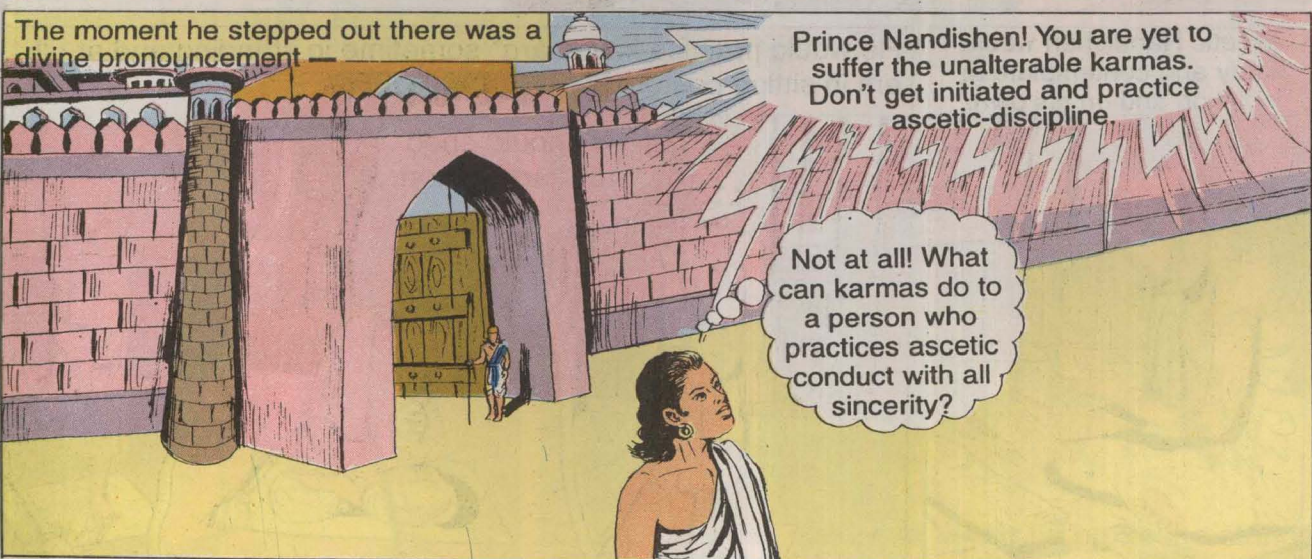
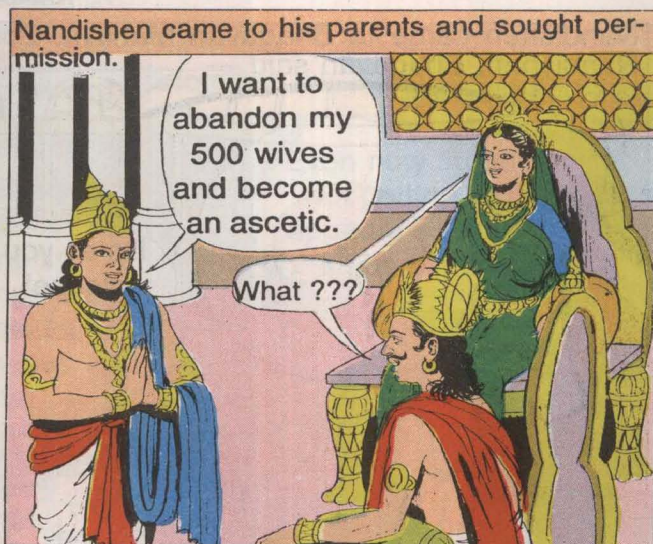
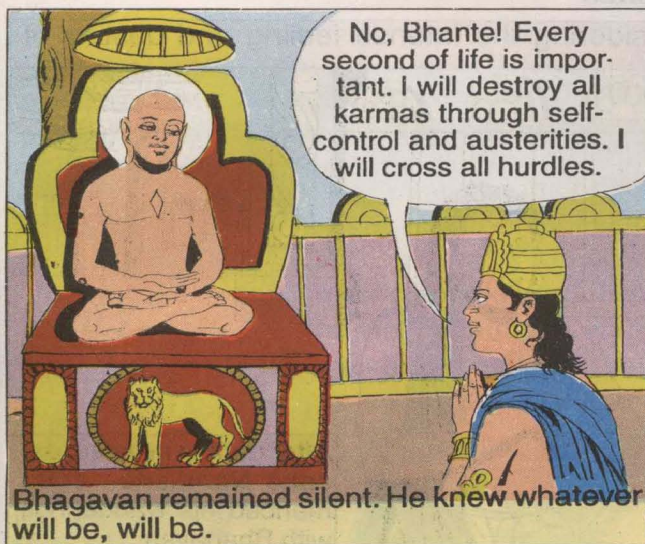


Bhante! I am filled with intense detachment. I don't want to lead worldly life.

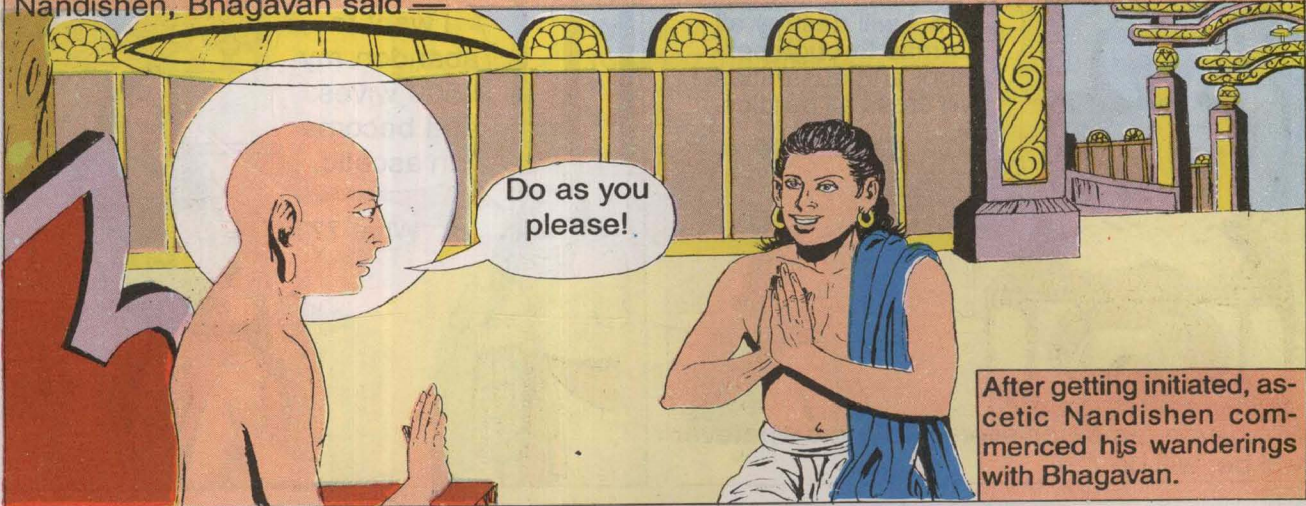
Son! To suffer the unalterable karmas is inevitable and no one can avoid it. Don't be so hasty?



* Meritorious karma.

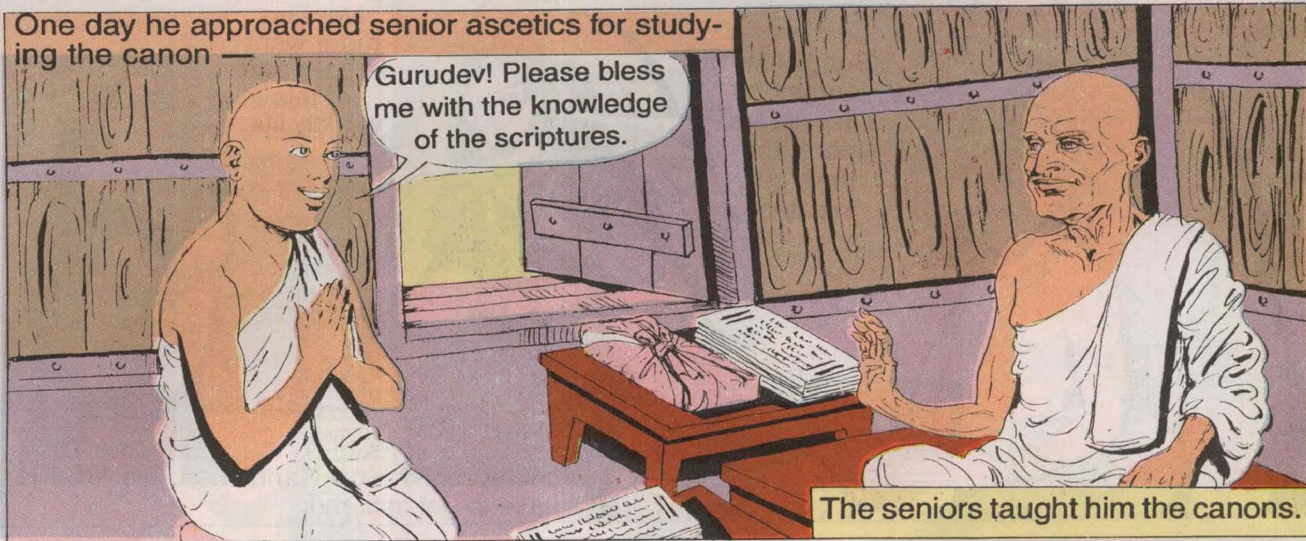


Nandishen came to Bhagavan Mahavir. Considering the intense feeling and destiny of Nandishen, Bhagavan said —



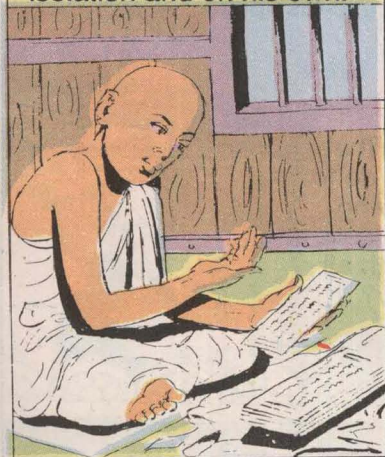
After getting initiated, ascetic Nandishen commenced his wanderings with Bhagavan.

One day he approached senior ascetics for studying the canon —

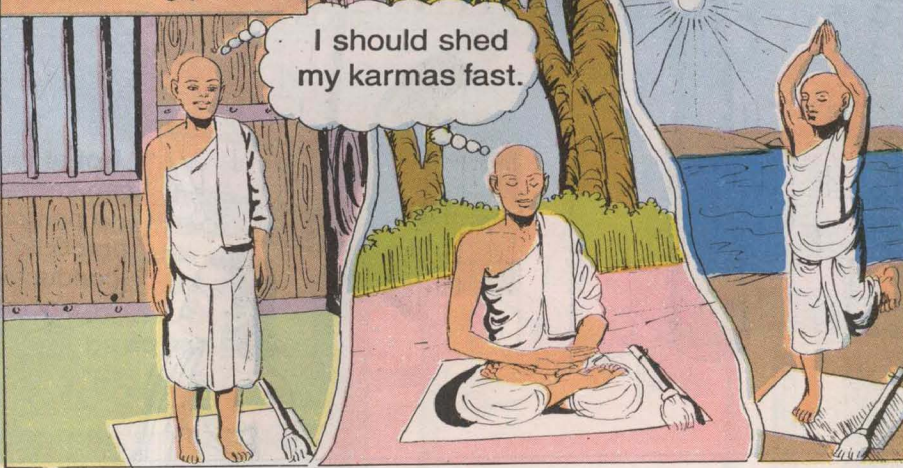


The seniors taught him the canons.

Ascetic Nandishen would study and contemplate in isolation and on his own.

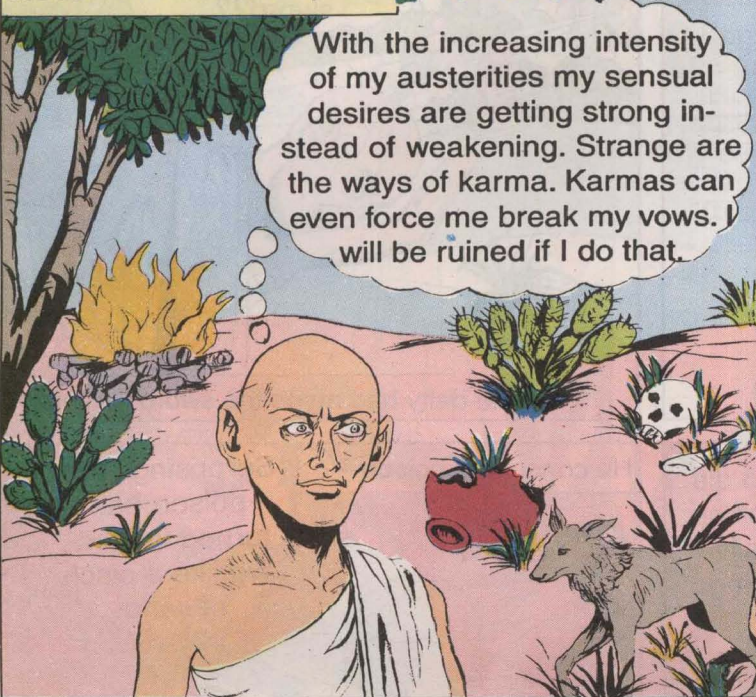


He would practice kayotsarg* sometime in standing and at others in sitting posture.

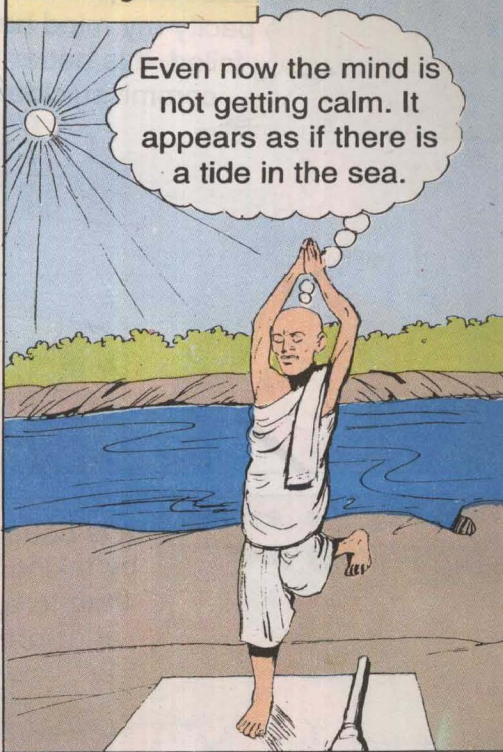


* Dissociation of mind from the body; a type of meditation.

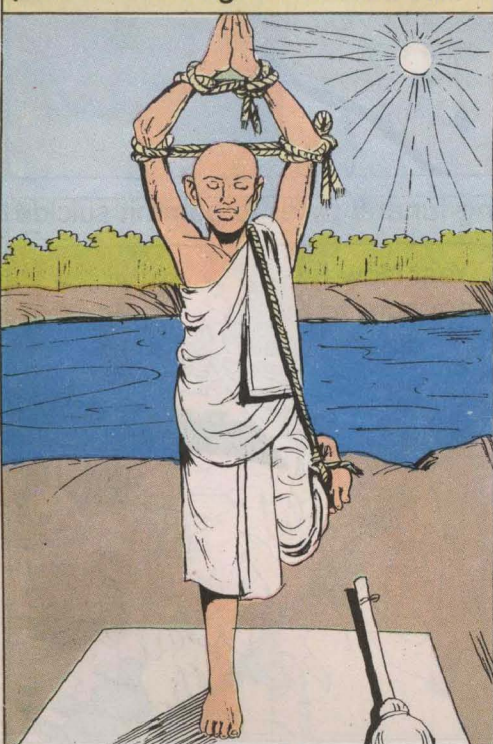
One day perversions in his mind became intense. His mind became so agitated that he started running around like a mad elephant. He thought —



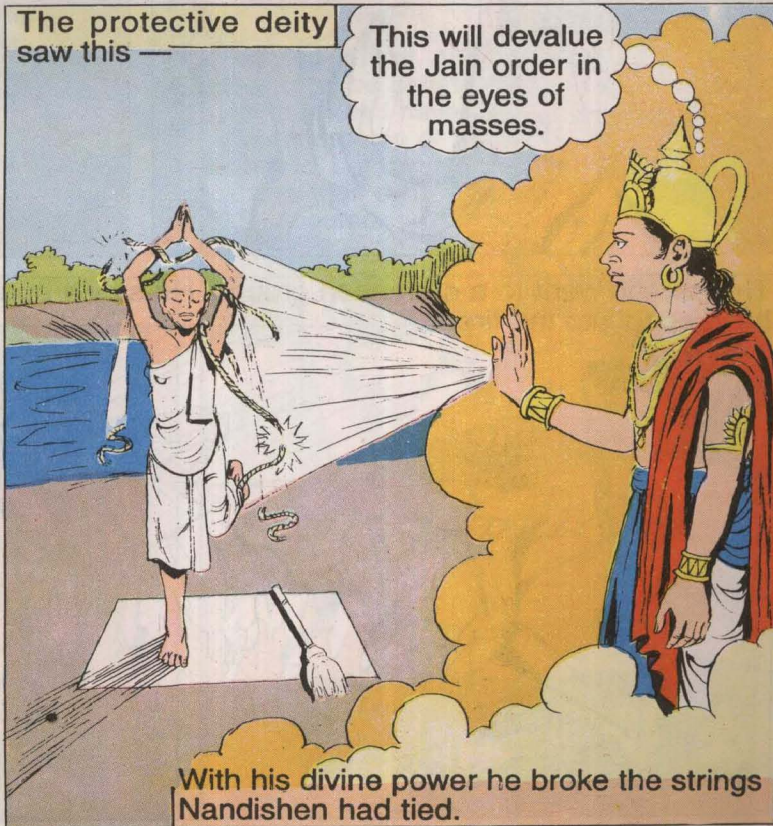
He resorted to the hardship of enduring scorching sun, standing on one leg —

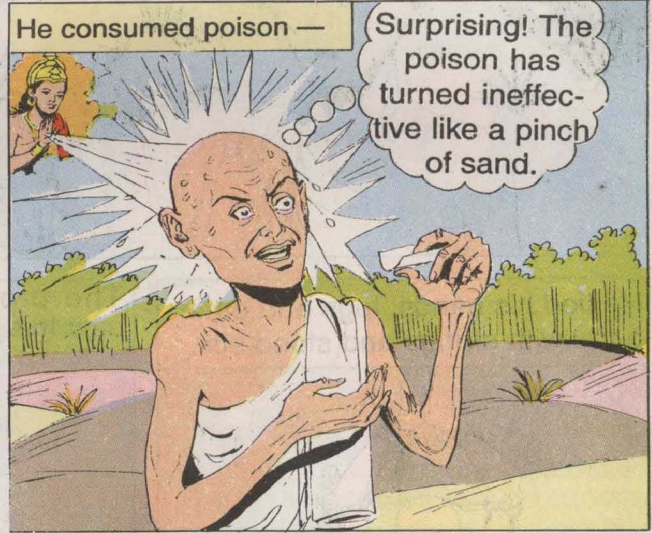
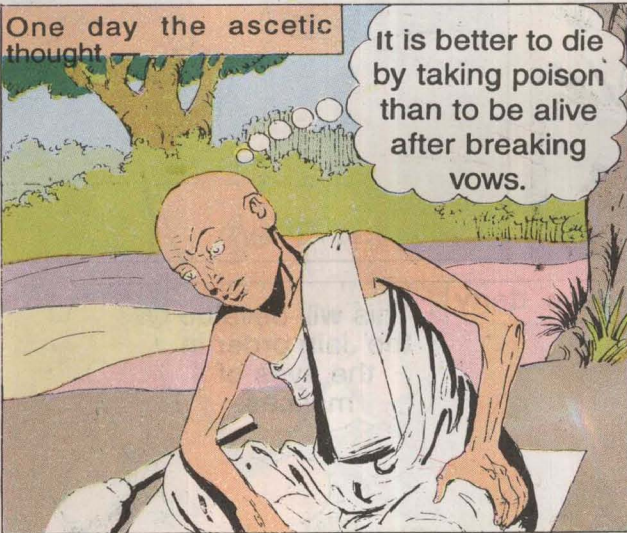
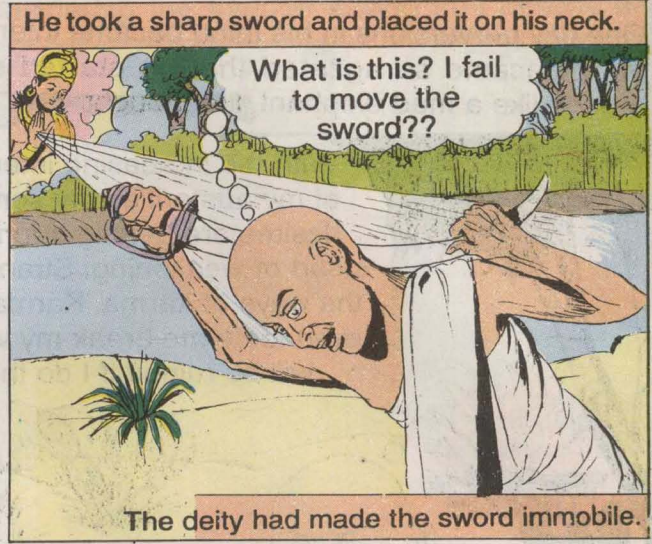
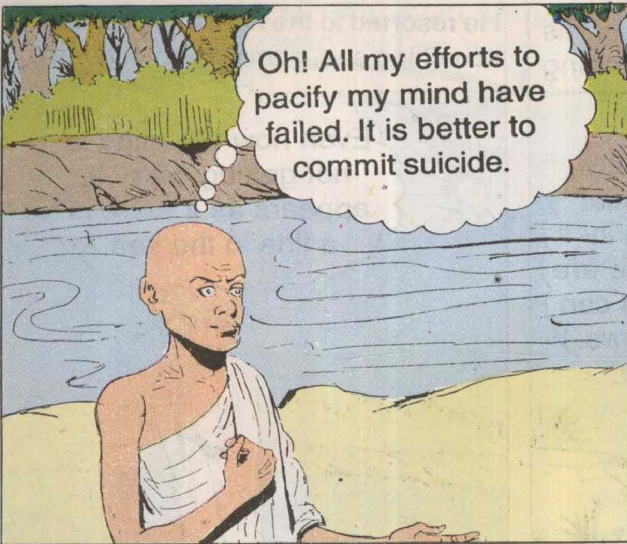


He tied his hands, legs and other parts with strings and stood still.



The protective deity saw this —

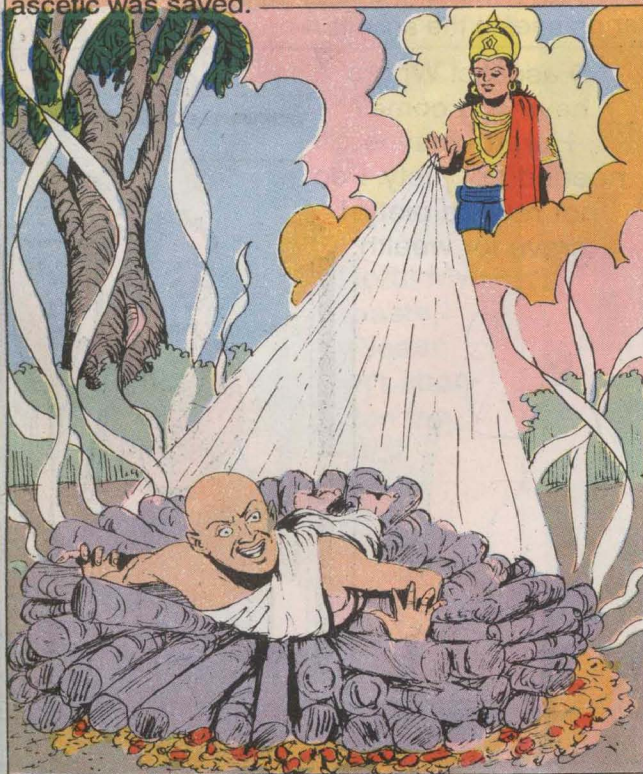




The ascetic went to a cremation ground. He saw a burning funeral pyre. To commit suicide he jumped into the fire.



The deity at once extinguished the fire and the ascetic was saved.



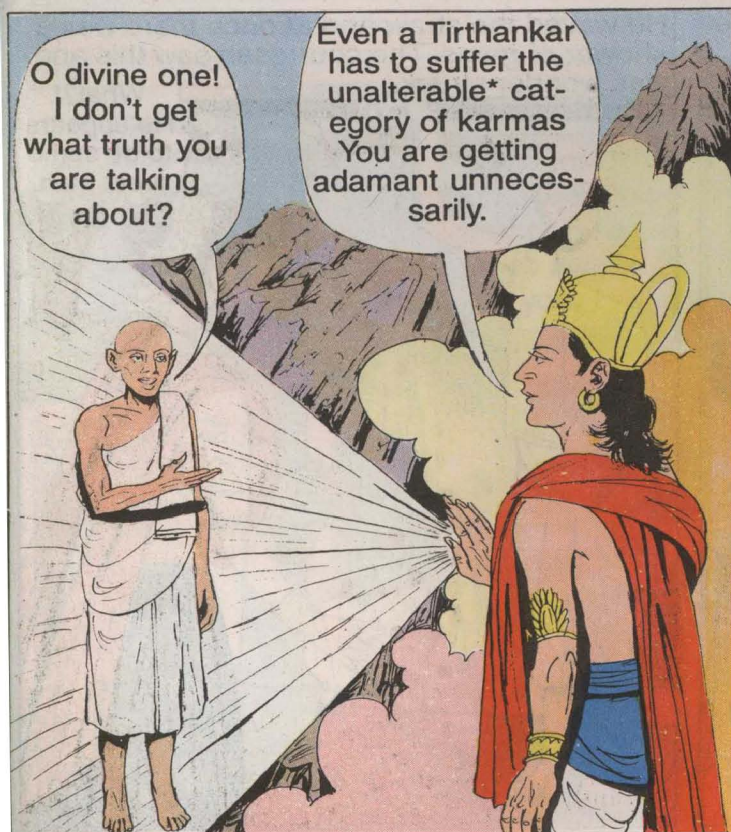
Now the ascetic climbed a hill and jumped into a ravine. The deity caught him in the air and said —

O dogmatic and mulish ascetic Nandishen! Why can't you accept the truth?



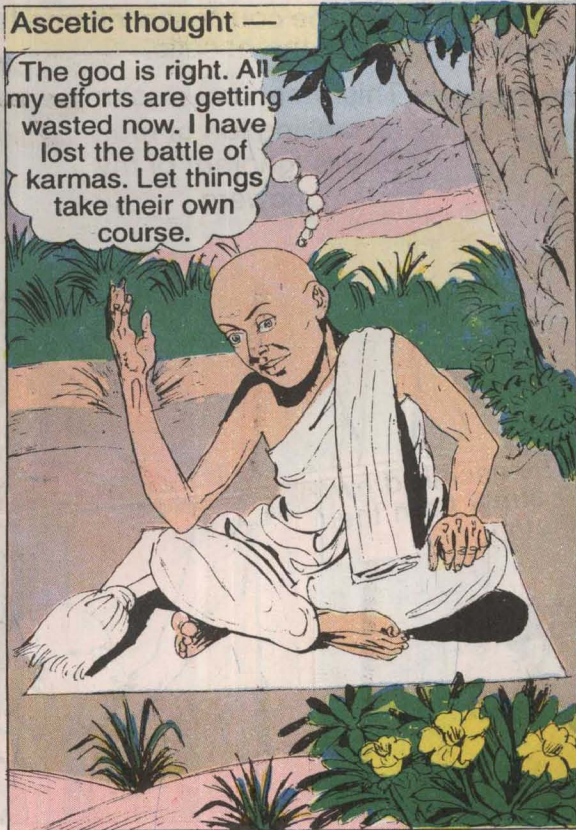
O divine one! I don't get what truth you are talking about?

Even a Tirthankar has to suffer the unalterable* category of karmas. You are getting adamant unnecessarily.



Ascetic thought —

The god is right. All my efforts are getting wasted now. I have lost the battle of karmas. Let things take their own course.

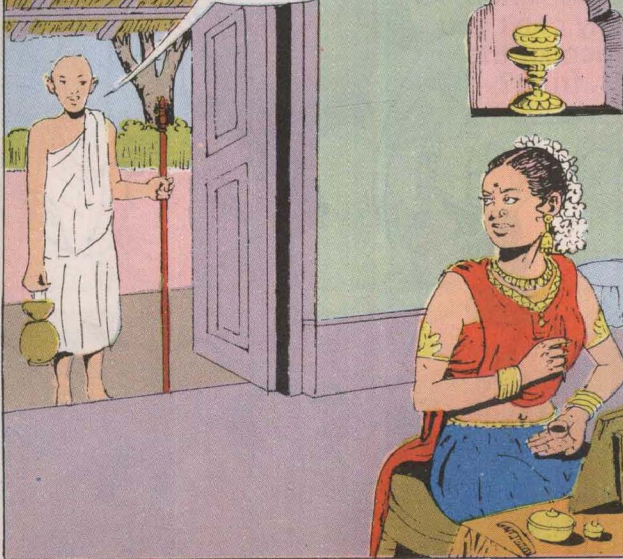


*Nikachit karmas cannot be shed without suffering their fruition.

In order to shed his karmas, ascetic Nandishen observed the Chhattha Tap* Once he set out to beg alms to break his two day fast. Wandering around he came to an unknown village. Standing at the gate of a house he uttered —

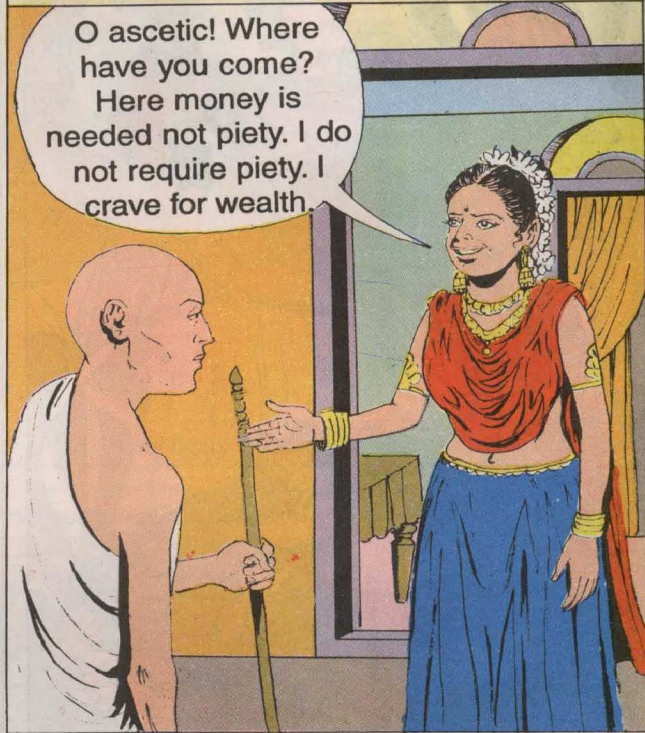
Dharmalabh!**

** May you be blessed with piety.



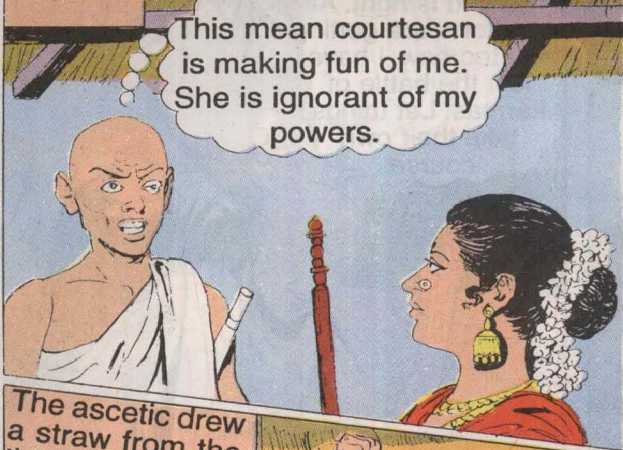
This happened to be the residence of a courtesan. She came at the gate and broke into laughter on seeing the ascetic —

O ascetic! Where have you come?
Here money is needed not piety. I do not require piety. I crave for wealth.

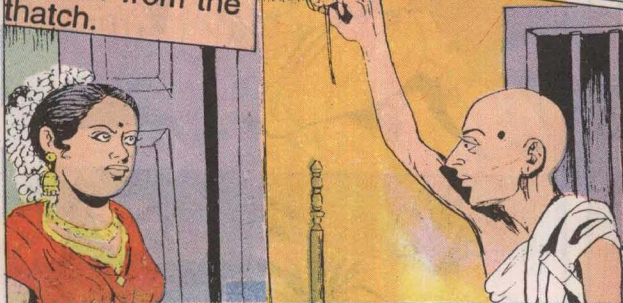


The mockery by the courtesan inflamed the anger and ego of the ascetic.

This mean courtesan is making fun of me. She is ignorant of my powers.

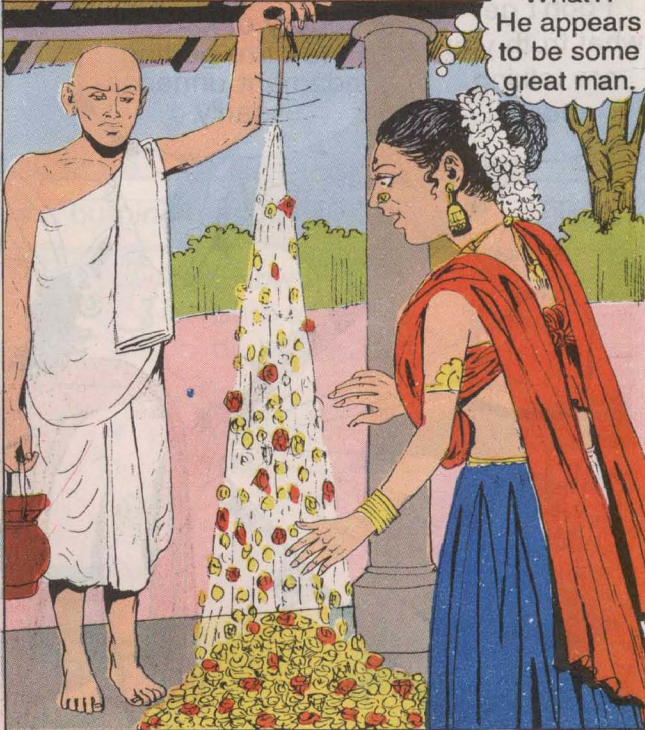


The ascetic drew a straw from the thatch.



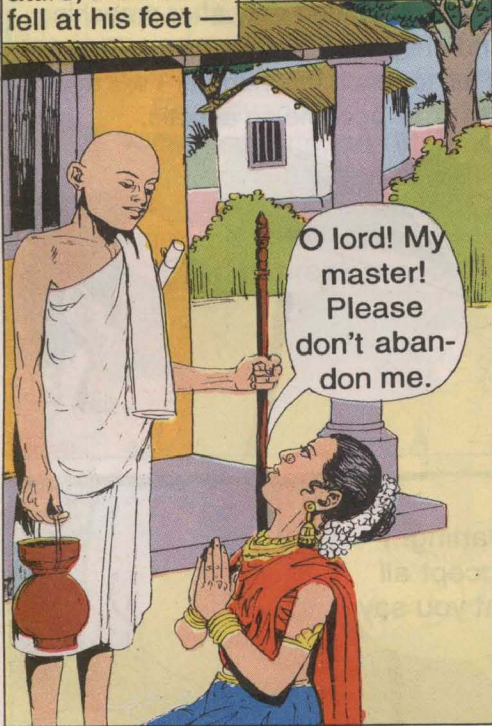
He waved the straw and at once there was a shower of gems. The courtesan saw this and was wonder struck.

What?!
He appears to be some great man.



* A series of two day fasting intervened by a day of meals. As a result of this harsh austerity he was endowed with many special powers. **16**

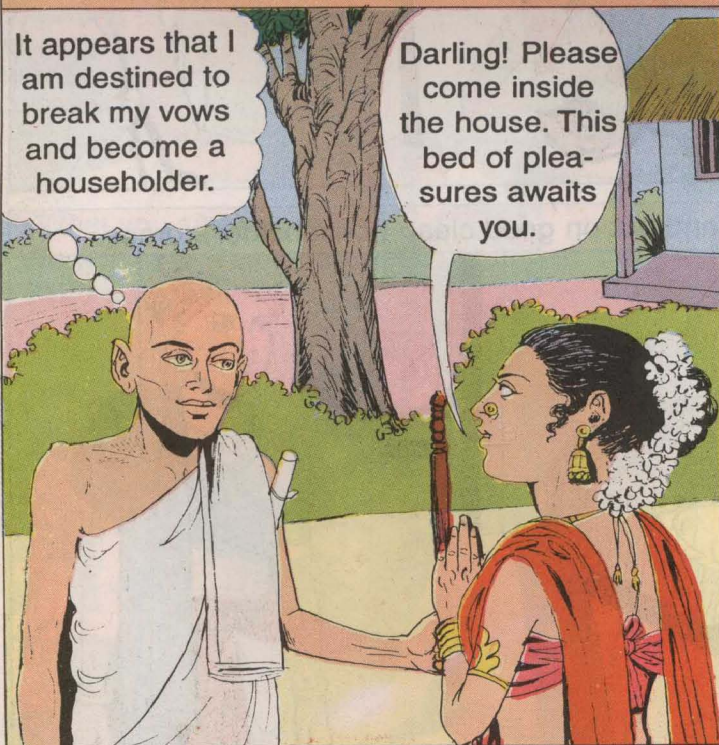
The ascetic stepped out of the house. Unmindful of her shabby attire, the courtesan rushed out and fell at his feet —



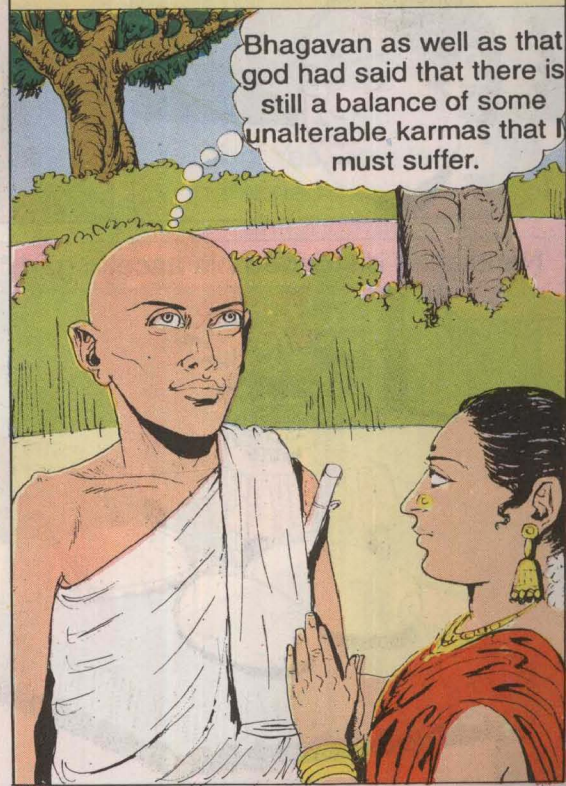
Her expressions and physical beauty stopped the ascetic in his track.

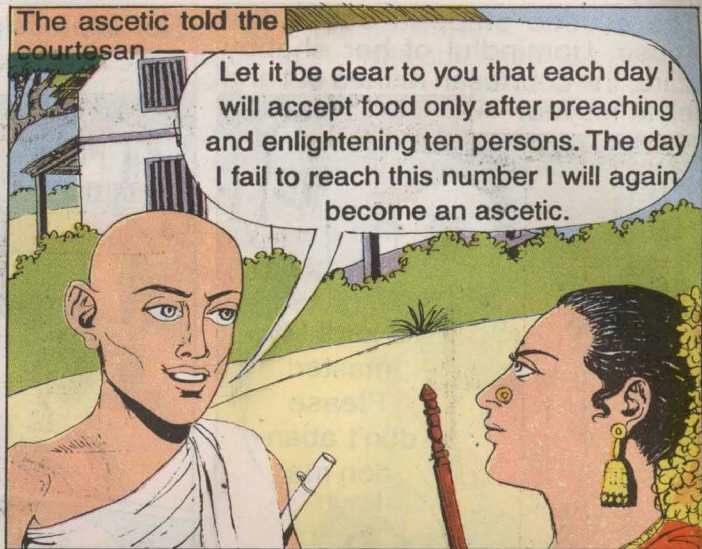
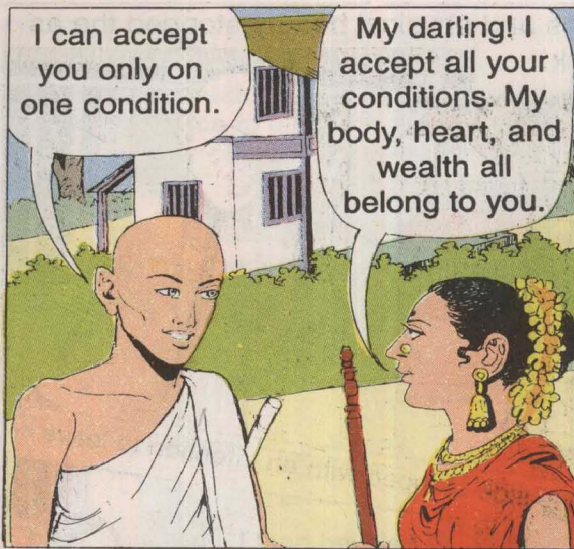


The beauty and attraction of the courtesan won over the resolve of the ascetic. He thought —

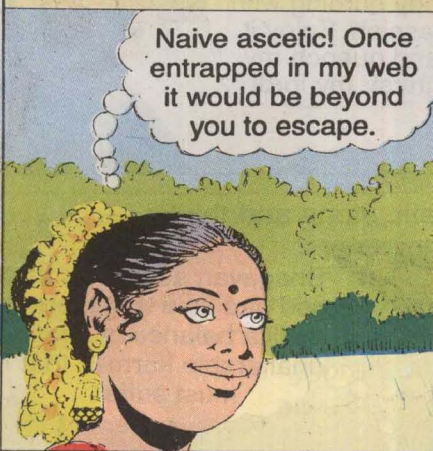


The ascetic stops and thinks —

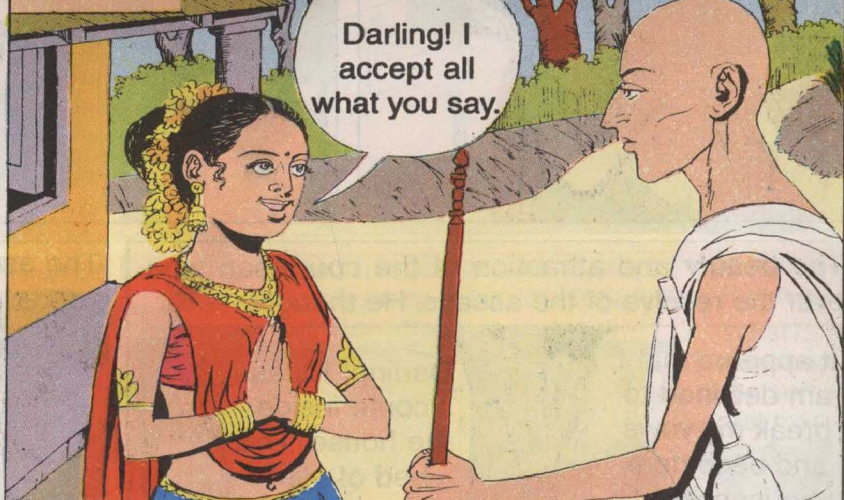




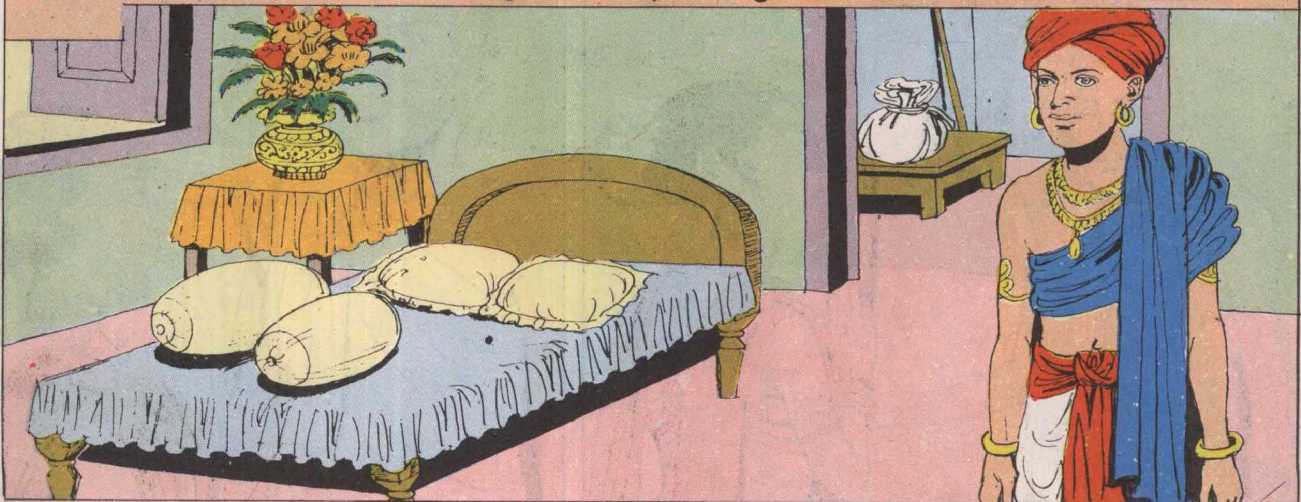
At these words the courtesan thought scornfully —



Then she said



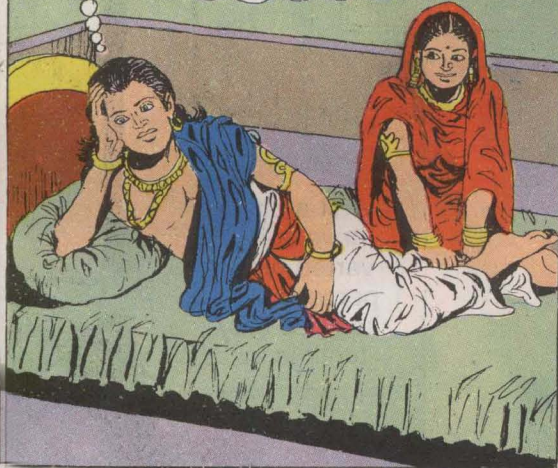
Nandishen discarded his ascetic garb* and put on good clean householder's dress.



* Dress, ascetic-broom and alms-pots.

Even while enjoying all what the courtesan had to offer including rich food, Nandishen's soul remained awake. She offers him food, fans him, and massages his feet. He is lost in his thoughts —

Bhagavan said that don't make haste, let the time mature. But I was adamant and ignored his words. Today I suffer the bitter consequences. I had to break my vows.



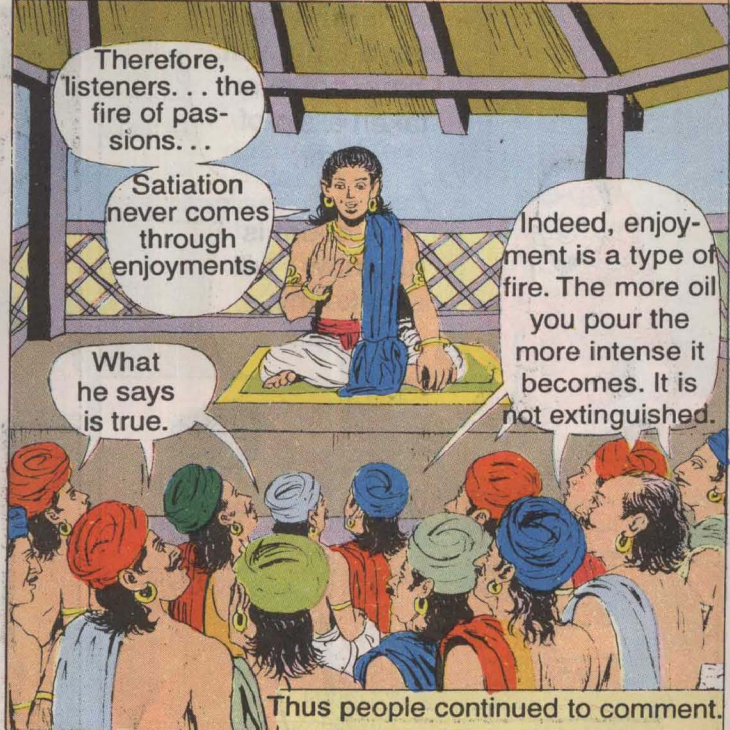
Come morning Nandishen would sit on a platform in the ground floor portion of the house and give religious discourse. The visitors carefully listened to what he said —

Therefore, listeners. . . the fire of passions. . .

Satiation never comes through enjoyments

What he says is true.

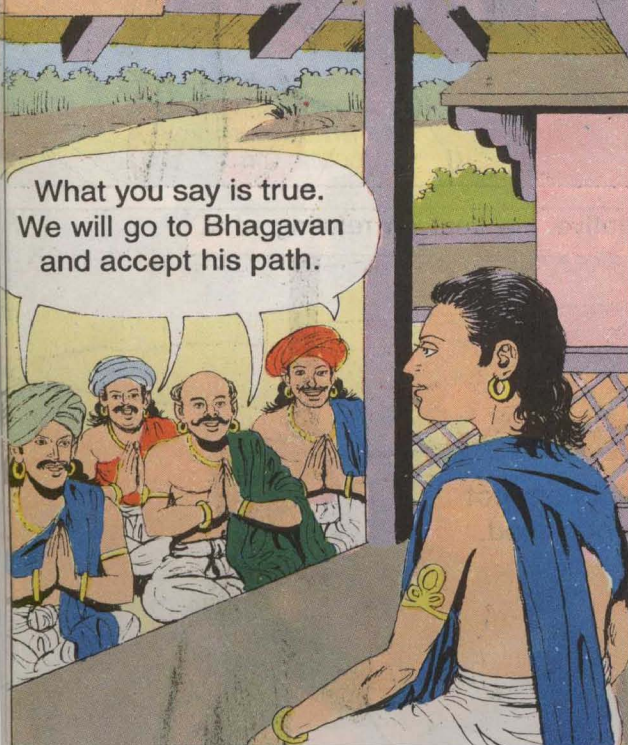
Indeed, enjoyment is a type of fire. The more oil you pour the more intense it becomes. It is not extinguished.



Thus people continued to comment.

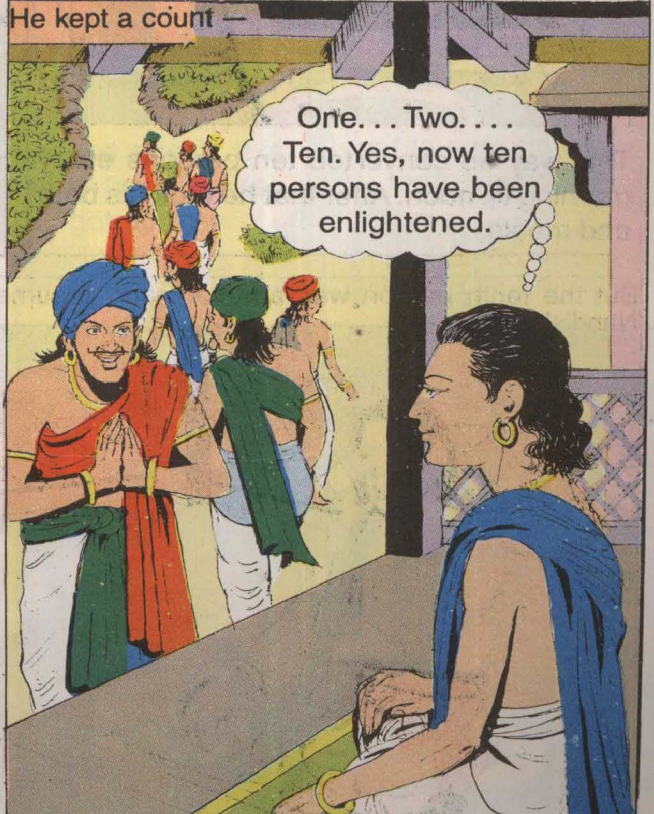
Nandishen continued these discussions from morning till noon. People in audience said —

What you say is true. We will go to Bhagavan and accept his path.



He kept a count —

One. . . Two. . . Ten. Yes, now ten persons have been enlightened.



As soon as he reached the count of ten he got up and went into the house.

My lord! It has been a long wait. I have not even taken a sip of water.

The count is ten, now I will take my meal.

This way he converted ten persons every morning till noon. After that he took his bath and meals.

One day it was past noon and the courtesan got tired waiting. She called from the first floor —

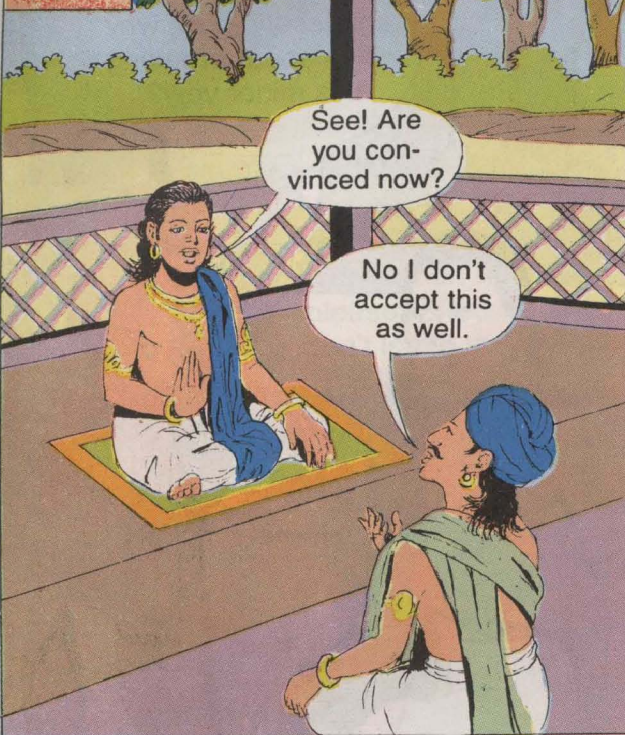
My lord! Please come. You are very late today. The food is getting cold.

Wait a bit. I have converted nine persons. As soon as this tenth is...

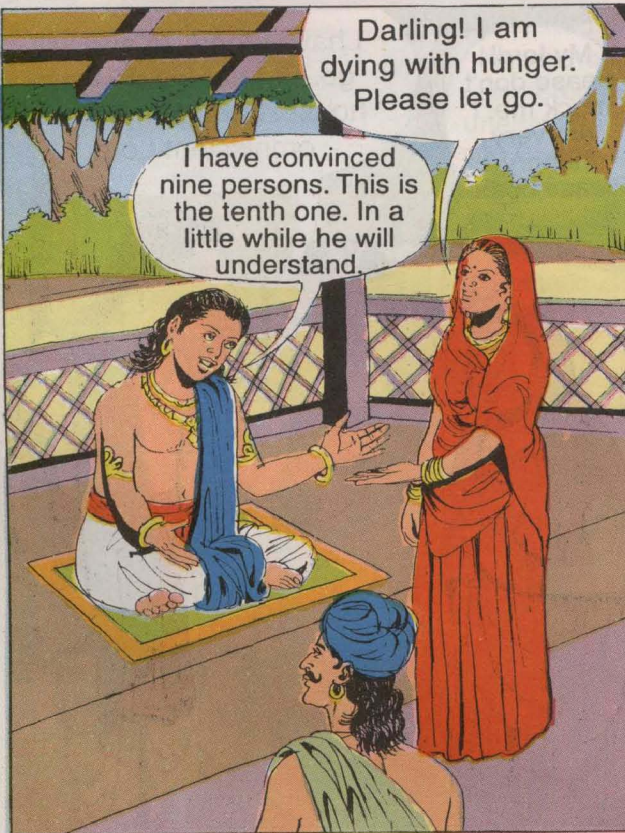
But the tenth person was adamant and argumentative. He kept on refuting what Nandishen said —

No! I am not convinced.

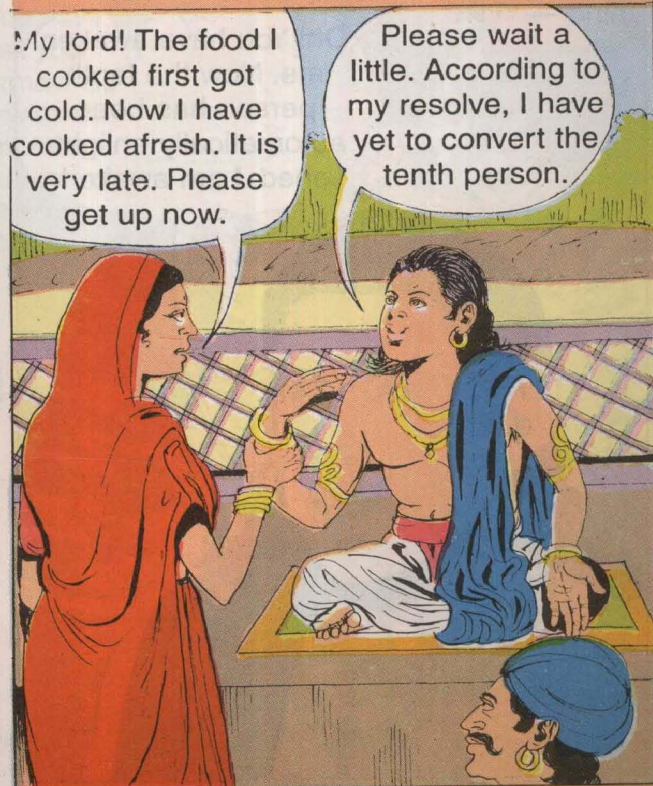
Nandishen tried to explain with another logic —



The courtesan came downstairs —



She went back but soon came again —



The courtesan reacted with irritation —

What sort of vow is this? You have already converted nine persons. Why not consider yourself to be the tenth and come to eat?

No! I can't break my vow.

The courtesan laughed —

When you have broken the all important ascetic-vow, why worry about breaking this minor vow?

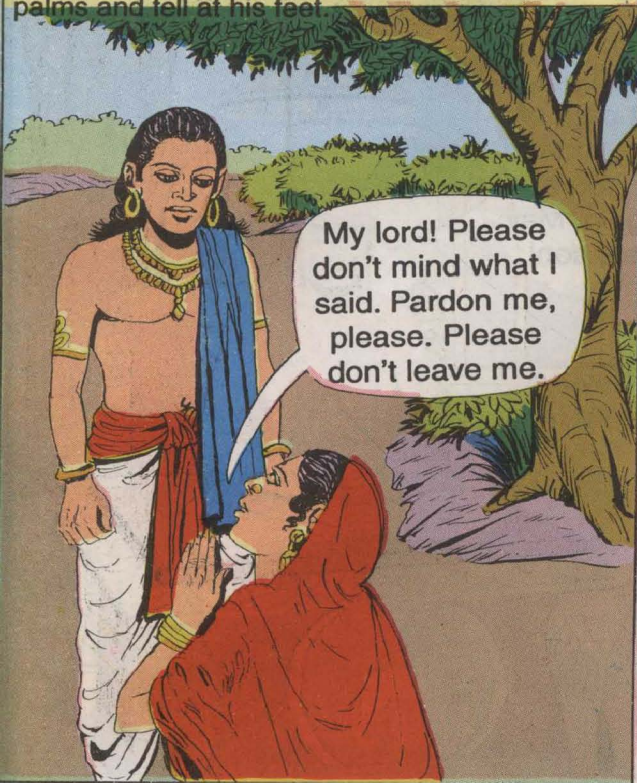
Nandishen suddenly got a jolt in his mind —

Oh! You have awakened me. Now the tenth person has been automatically enlightened. I am awake!

My lord! please don't mock me. I am very hungry. Please come.

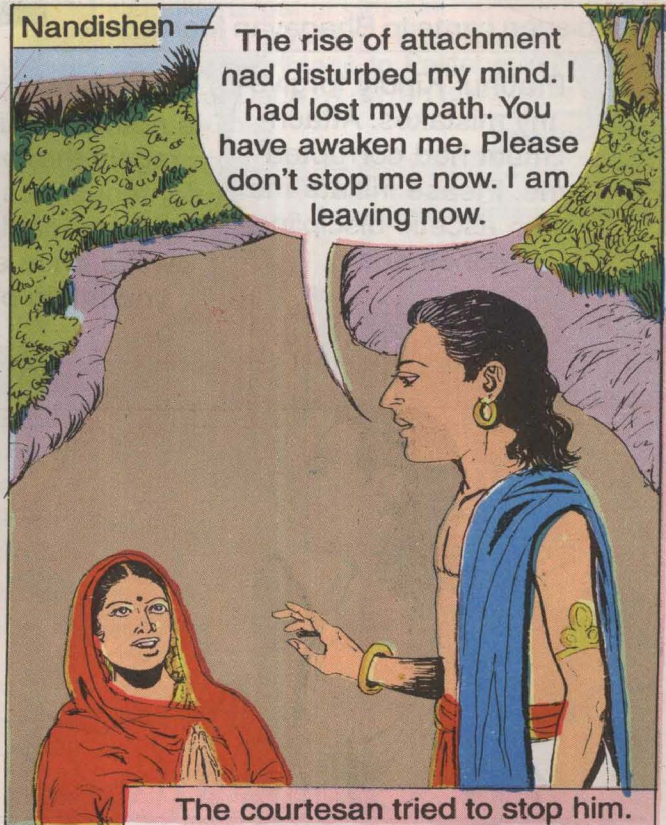
I have stood up and will go. But not inside your house. I am going to my omniscient Lord.

The courtesan started crying. She joined her palms and fell at his feet.

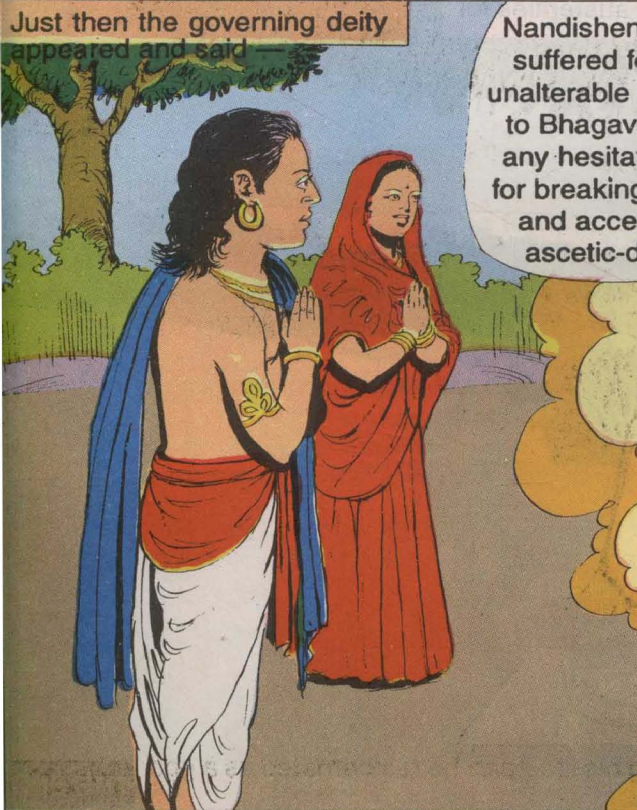


Nandishen

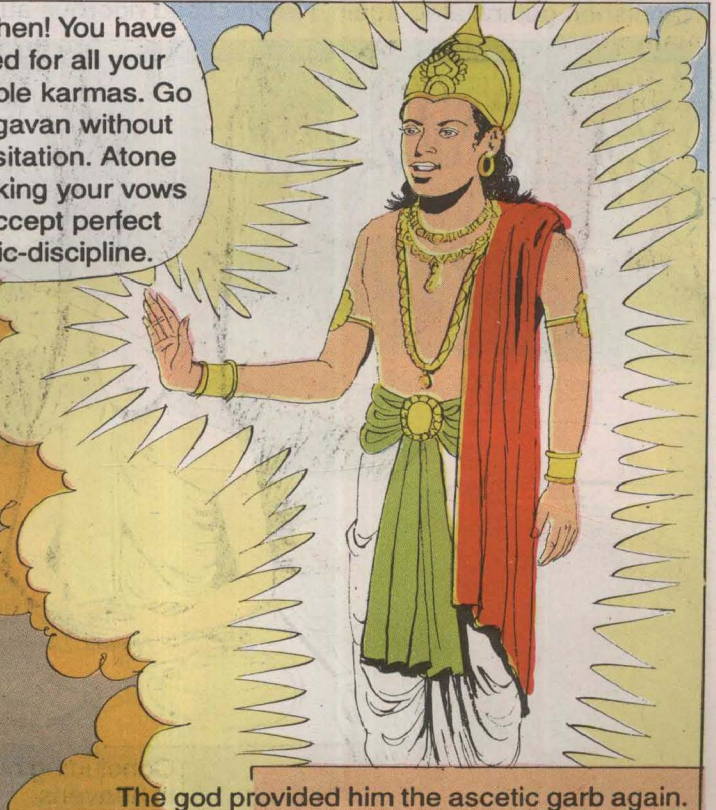
The rise of attachment had disturbed my mind. I had lost my path. You have awakened me. Please don't stop me now. I am leaving now.



Just then the governing deity appeared and said



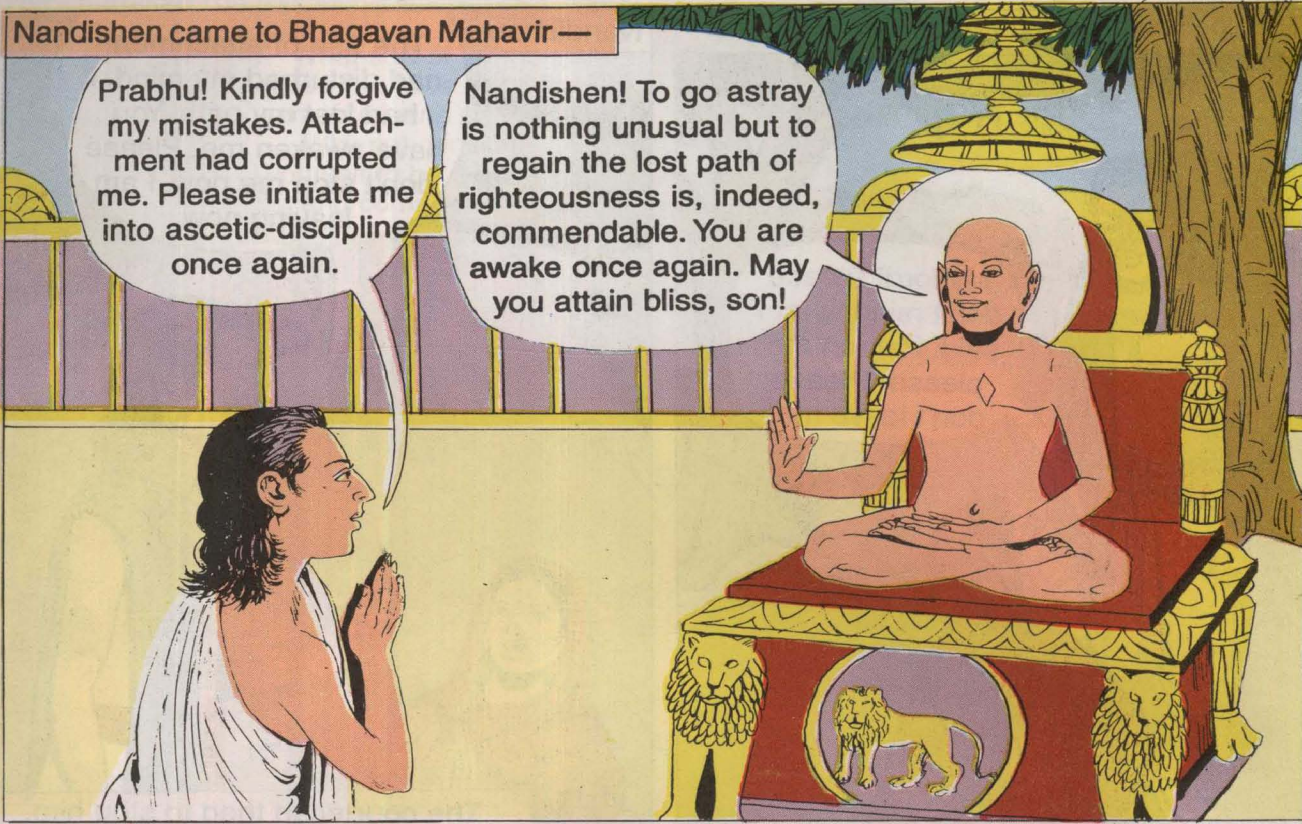
Nandishen! You have suffered for all your unalterable karmas. Go to Bhagavan without any hesitation. Atone for breaking your vows and accept perfect ascetic-discipline.



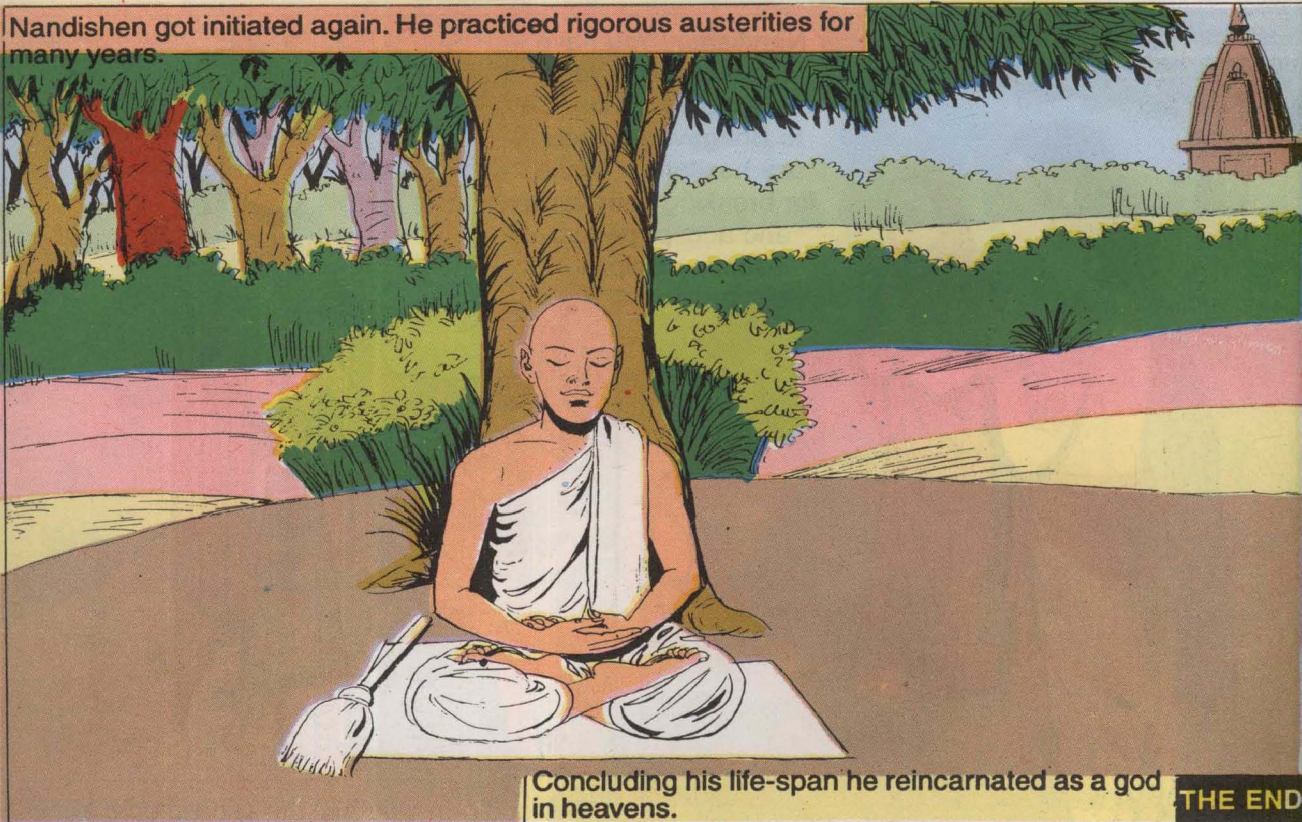
Nandishen came to Bhagavan Mahavir —

Prabhu! Kindly forgive my mistakes. Attachment had corrupted me. Please initiate me into ascetic-discipline once again.

Nandishen! To go astray is nothing unusual but to regain the lost path of righteousness is, indeed, commendable. You are awake once again. May you attain bliss, son!



Nandishen got initiated again. He practiced rigorous austerities for many years.

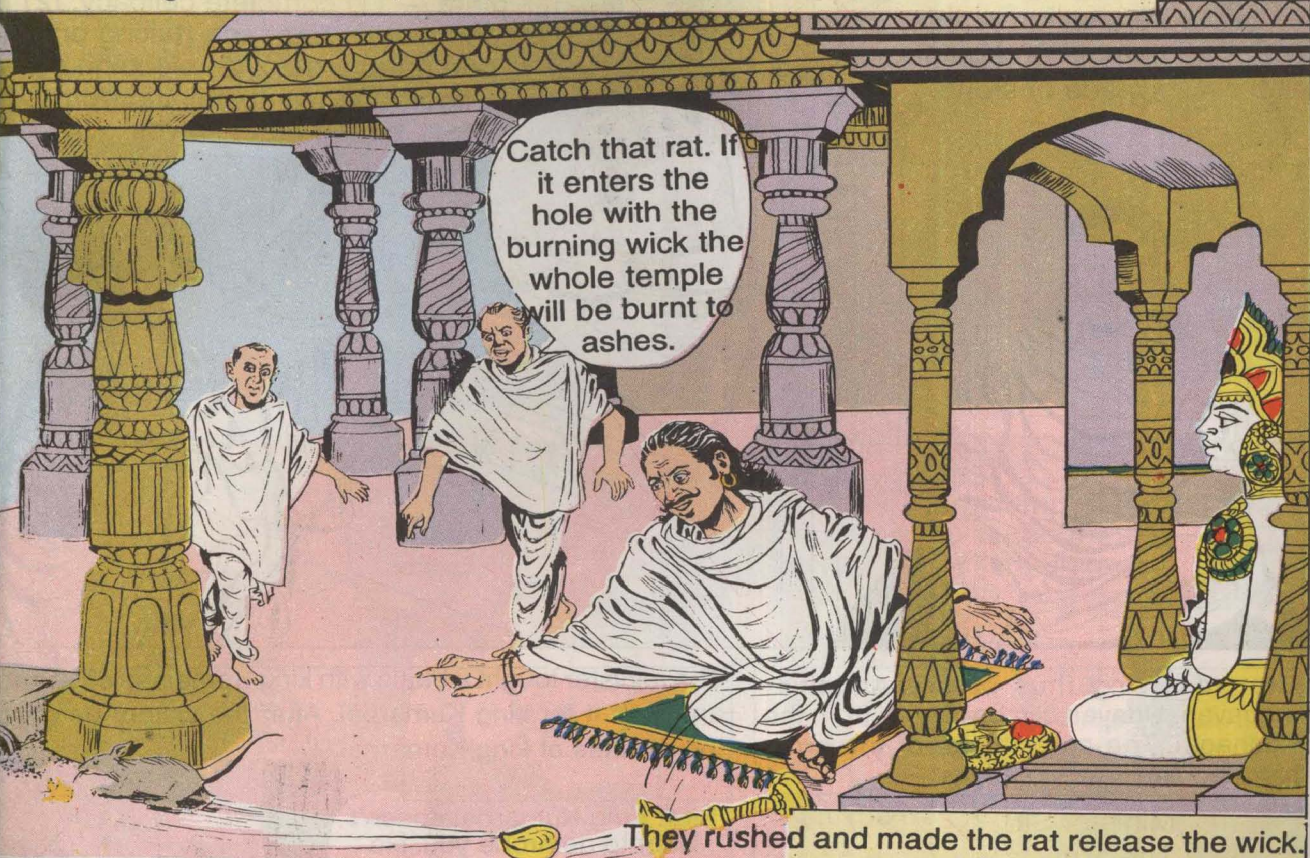


Concluding his life-span he reincarnated as a god in heavens.

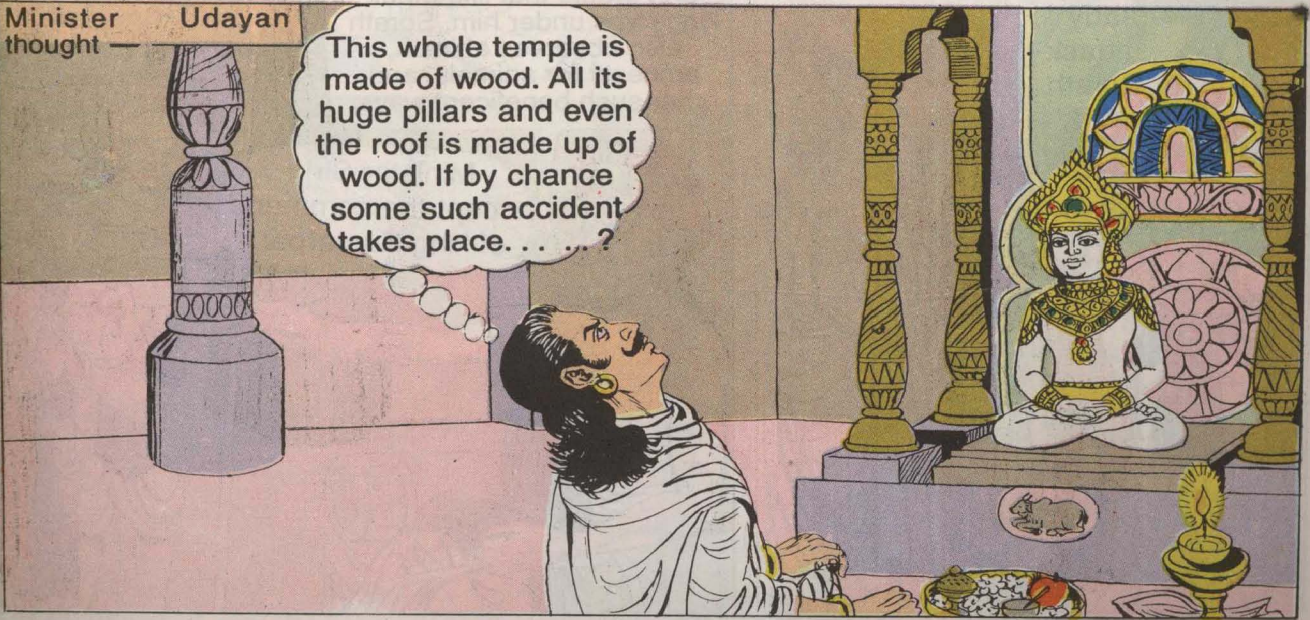
THE END

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DRESS

Udayan was the prime minister of King Kumarpal of Gujarat. He was intelligent as well as an accomplished warrior. He had fought and won many battles alongside Kumarpal. Once Udayan went for pilgrimage to Palitana. While he was sitting and devotedly singing hymns before the image of Adishvar Dada* A rat ran towards its hole with a burning wick from a lamp. The priests in the temple also saw this.



Minister thought — Udayan



Udayan thought over for some time and came up with an idea —

I should launch the renovation of this temple and get it made of stone.

This idea transformed into a resolve —

Prabhu! I resolve to accept and observe these four vows till the renovation of this temple is complete — (1) complete celibacy; (2) continuous Ekasana [taking only one meal a day]; (3) sleeping on floor; and (4) abstaining from eating betel-leaves.

After resolving thus before Adishvar bhagavan, Udayan climbed down from the Siddhagiri. The commander of the army informed him after greetings —

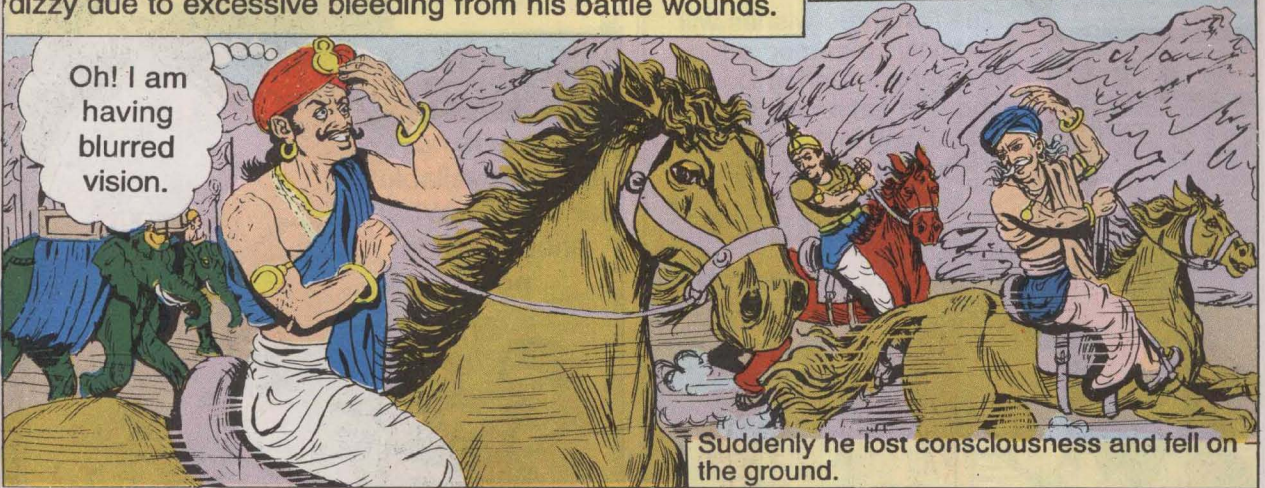
Minister Sir!
The army is ready to attack Sorath.

The minister fought a battle with king Samarsen of Sorath and won it for king Kumarpal. After the victory he gave the dictates of king Kumarpal —

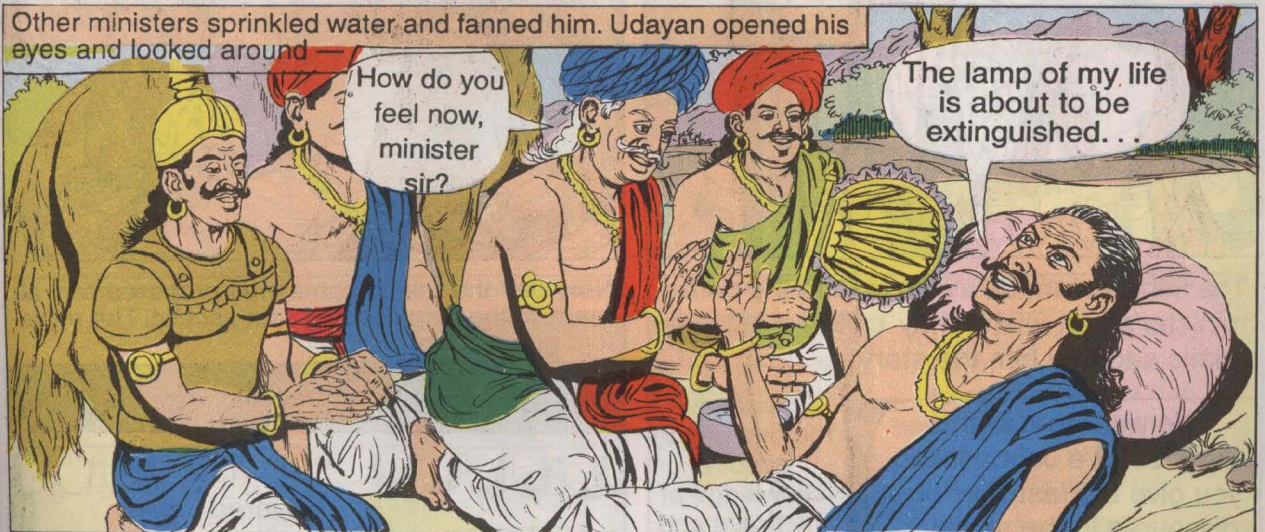
Sire! King Kumarpal doesn't want to dethrone you. He only wants that like other kingdoms under him, Sorath also observes ahimsa, amnesty for animals, and other such beneficent ways.

Minister Sir! I accept the command of king Kumarpal.

After conquering king Samarsen, minister Udayan moved towards Patan. On the way he felt dizzy due to excessive bleeding from his battle wounds.



Other ministers sprinkled water and fanned him. Udayan opened his eyes and looked around



The ministers asked



On hearing the last wishes of prime minister Udayan, the other ministers thought —

The first three wishes will certainly be carried out by his elder son Bahad Dev but where to get an ascetic for preaching in this remote jungle to fulfill his fourth desire?

Let's search nearby villages.



The ministers searched around some villages but failed to find any ascetic

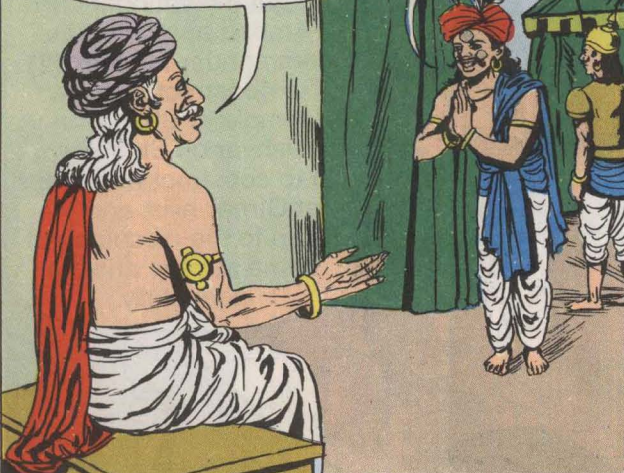
There is no ascetic available far or near. What should we do now?



The ministers made a plan to fulfill the prime minister's last wish. They called a village-mimic and told him the story

We want that in the disguise of a Jain ascetic you give the last religious discourse to the minister. We offer you any desired reward.

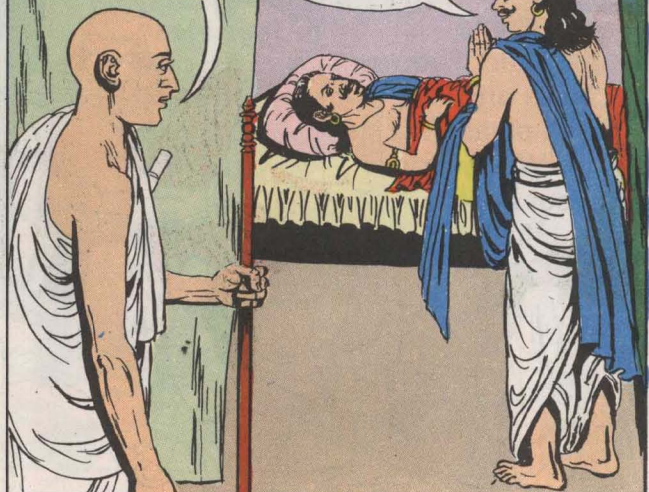
Please give me one day to acquire knowledge of the dress and ways of a Jain ascetic.



Next day the mimic came well prepared and already in the disguise of a Jain ascetic. The ministers greeted him —

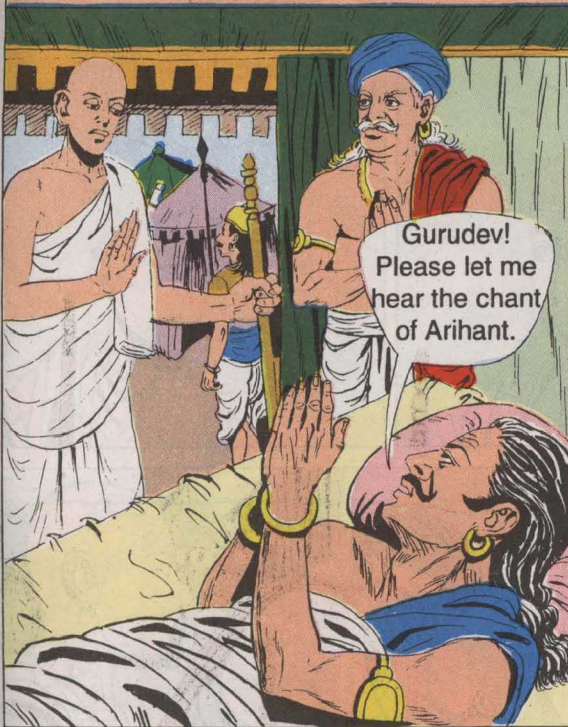
DHARMALAAABH!

Revered ascetic has arrived.

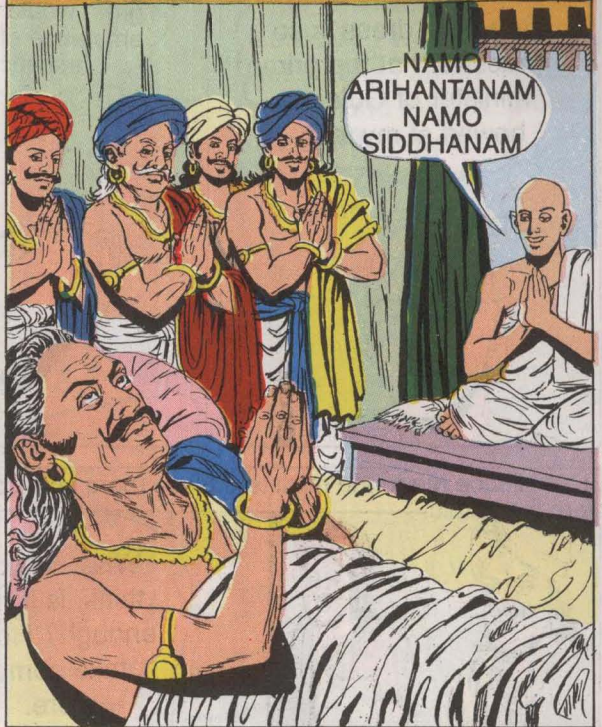


* Traditional greeting by Jain ascetics meaning may you be blessed with religion

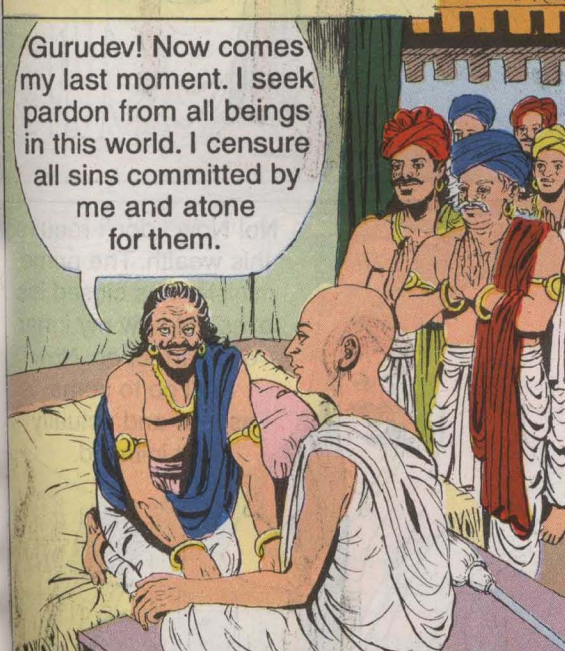
Udayan opened his eyes and beamed with joy. He joined his palms and extended greetings —



The acting ascetic chanted hymns and prayers.

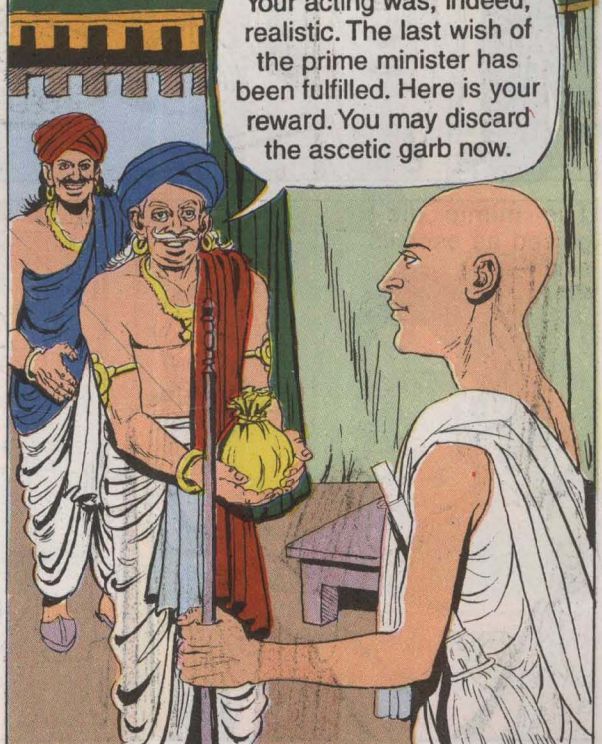


In his semi-conscious state Udayan sat up and devotedly touched the feet of the ascetic.



He reclined again and breathed his last listening to the chanting by the ascetic.

The ministers said to the acting ascetic



The acting ascetic thought —

How pious is the ascetic-garb. This dress is so impressive that the prime minister of Gujarat bowed at my feet.



When so great is the significance of the dress, how great would be the eminence of a real ascetic?

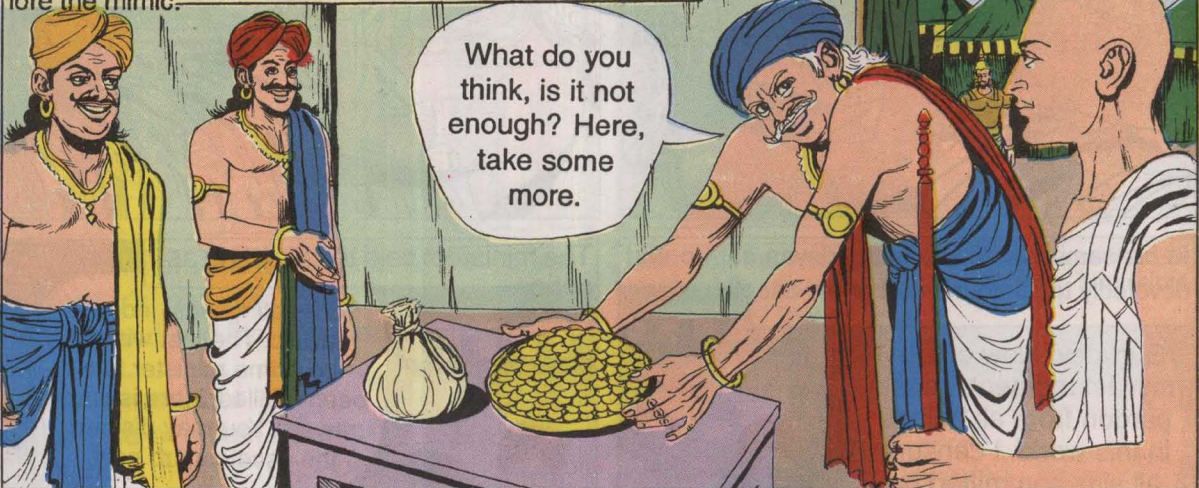


He decided —

I will not discard this dress now. From an impostor I will become a true ascetic and make my life worthwhile.



This silence made the ministers place more gold coins before the mimic.

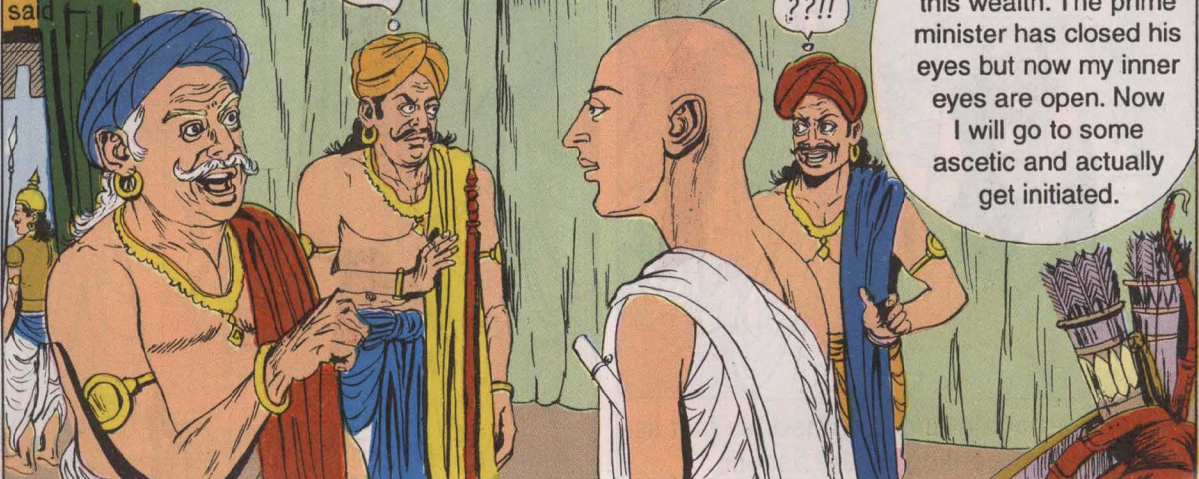


The mimic disguised as ascetic said

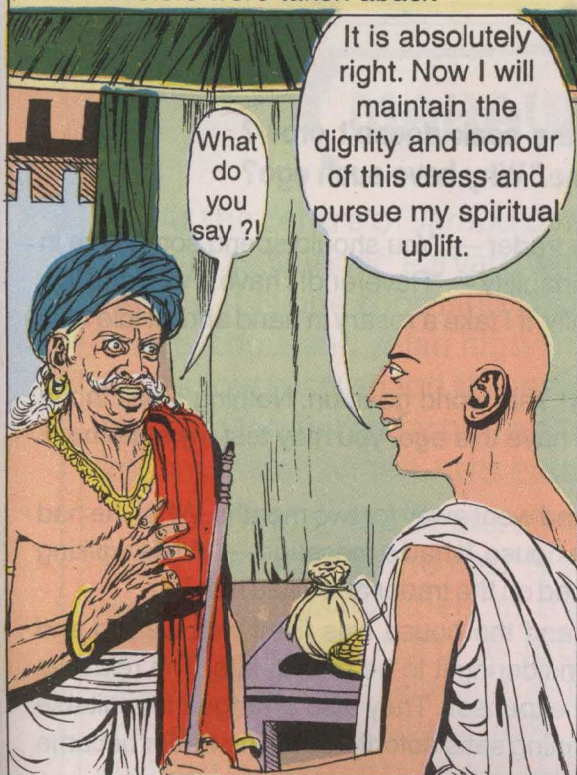
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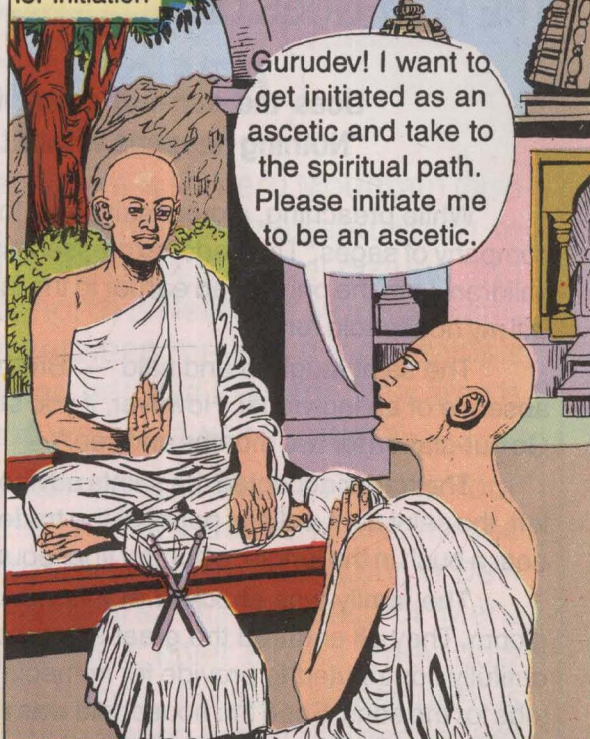
No! Now I don't require this wealth. The prime minister has closed his eyes but now my inner eyes are open. Now I will go to some ascetic and actually get initiated.



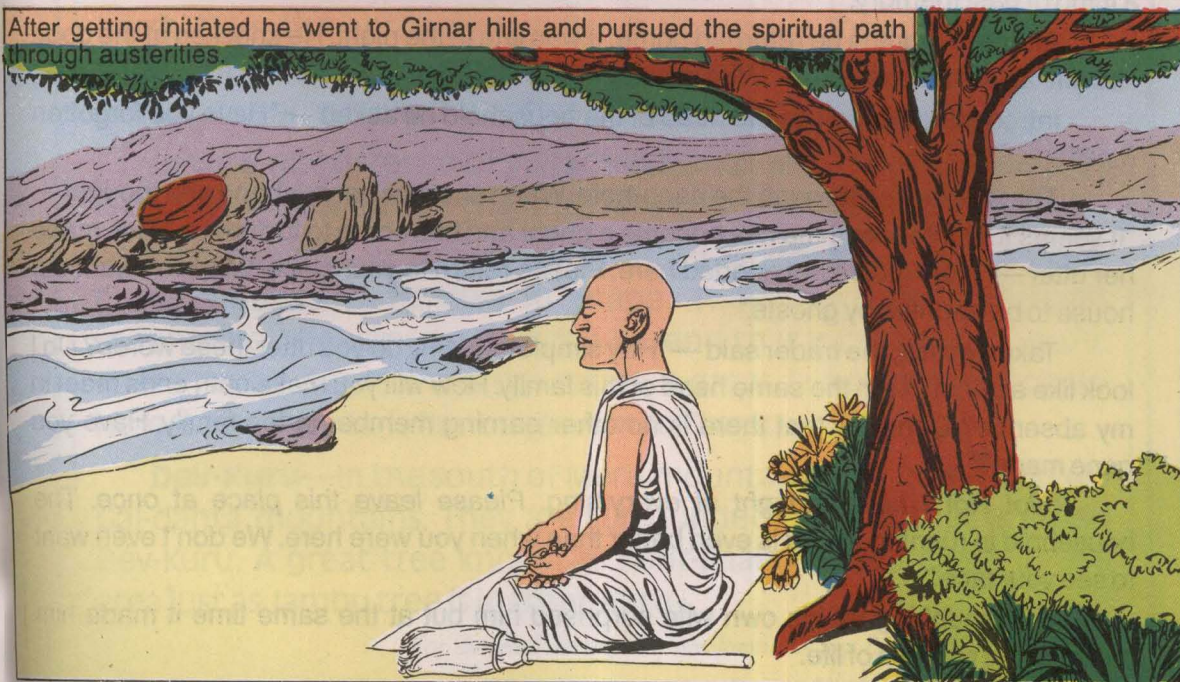
The ministers were taken aback —



The mimic went to an acharya and requested him for initiation



After getting initiated he went to Girnar hills and pursued the spiritual path through austerities.



THE LESSON : The change of attitude made a real ascetic of a mere impostor leading him to immortality. Indeed, he is successful who transforms from fake to real.

THE PLAY GOES ON

**Does the sun not dawn if the cock doesn't crow?
"Nothing happens without me." Why have such ego?**

While preaching, a great saint said to a trader — "You should spend some time in company of sages." The trader expressed his inability — "Reverend! I have a wife and five children. I am the only bread earner in the family. If I take a rosary in hand and sit idle how will my household run?"

The saint laughed and said — "Brother! This world goes on. Nothing stops in the absence of an individual. However, if you still have this ego, you may test my statement. Go out-station for two months and see."

The trader accepted the saint's advice and went away for two months. When he had left, the saint sent a slip of paper at the trader's house. It had a message — "While walking near a bush in the jungle, a hungry tiger pounced on the trader and killed him."

The family was shocked at this news and the house was filled with wailing and gloom. They all endured the great sorrow considering it to be their ill-fate. The relatives dutifully contributed to provide for immediate expenses. They also arranged for suitable jobs for the sons. Soon the household was running satisfactorily. Soon the trader became a thing of past memory.

After two months he returned home. It was late in the night. He knocked at the door. His wife asked from inside — "Who is there?"

Introducing himself as the head of the household he asked — "Have you forgotten me?"

The wife looked through the peep-hole. When she saw her husband she thought — "It seems that after death he has become a ghost and has come to torture us." This made her utter — "No! You are not needed here. Please return to your place. We don't want our house to be haunted by ghosts."

Taken aback, the trader said — "Hey simpleton! Why do you utter these words? Do I look like a ghost? I am the same head of this family. How will you make both ends meet in my absence? Consider that there is no other earning member in the family. Have you gone mad?"

"No! No! I have thought of everything. Please leave this place at once. The household is running well. It is even better than when you were here. We don't even want to see your face."

This snubbing by his own wife surprised him but at the same time it made him aware of the realities of life.

He went to the saint and narrated the story. He got detached from this selfish world and took to the spiritual path.



MAHAVIDEH AREA

At the centre of *Jambu Dveep*, there is Sumeru Mountain (also known as Mandar Parvat) which is hundred thousand *yojan* in height. It is one thousand *yojan* deep from the level ground and ninety thousand *yojan* high. In its north is Neelvant Mountain and in the South is Nishadh Mountain. Between these two mountains is the land inhabited by human beings, bed-like in shape. This area is known as Mahavideh. In its east and west is *Lawan Samudra*.

Due to location of Meru Mountain, this area is divided in four parts. The area in the east is eastern Mahavideh. The area in the west is Apar Mahavideh. In the South of Meru Mountains is Dev-Kuru and in the north is Uttar-Kuru area. In the east of Meru Mountain is River Sita and in the west is River Sitoda. They flow mid-way in *Mahavideh* area. Therefore, Poorva Mahavideh is divided in two parts and the Apar Mahavideh is also divided in two parts. Thus, the entire *Mahavideh* is divided in four parts. Each of these four parts have eight continents called Vijay. Thus, the four *Mahavideh* area have thirty-two Vijays.

In view of existence of Vaitadhya Parvat in between, each Vijay is divided in tow parts—the Northern area and the Southern area.

Uttar-Kuru—In the north of Meru Mountain there are two great mountains tusklike in shape. They are called Gaj-danta mountains. They are surrounded by land that is called Uttar-Kuru. There *Yugaliya* human beings reside. A great *Jambu* tree is located here. So this *dveep* is famous as *Jambu Dveep*.

Dev-Kuru—In the south of Meru mountains also, there are two Gaj-danta mountains. They are surrounded by land that is called Dev-Kuru. A great tree known as Koot-Shalmali tree exists in this area just as *Jambu* tree is in Uttar-Kuru.

*For detailed description see Jambu Dveep Prajnapti Vakshaskar 4
(Ganitanuyog—Description of Tiryak Lok)*

